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# TIPU SULTAN

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**VILLAIN OR HERO?**

**AN ANTHOLOGY**

Sita Ram Goel

TIPU SULTAN  
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AN ANTHOLOGY

VOICE OF INDIA  
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## PREFACE

Secularism *per se* is a doctrine which arose in the modern West as a revolt against the closed creed of Christianity. Its battle-cry was that the State should be freed from the stranglehold of the Church, and the citizen should be left to his own individual choice in matters of belief. And it met with great success in every Western democracy.

Had India borrowed this doctrine from the modern West, it would have meant a rejection of the closed creeds of Islam and Christianity, and a promotion of the Sanatana Dharma family of faiths which have been naturally secularist in the modern Western sense. But what happened actually was that Secularism in India became the greatest protector of closed creeds which had come here in the company of foreign invaders, and kept tormenting the national society for several centuries.

We should not, therefore, confuse India's Secularism with its namesake in the modern West. The Secularism which Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru propounded and which has prospered in post-independence India, is a new concoction and should be recognized as such. We need not bother about its various definitions as put forward by its pandits. We shall do better if we have a close look at its concrete achievements.

Going by those achievements, one can conclude quite safely that Nehruvian Secularism is a magic formula for transmitting base metals into twenty-four carat gold. How else do we explain the fact of Islam becoming a religion, and that too a religion of tolerance, social equality, and human brotherhood; or the fact of Muslim rule in medieval India becoming an indigenous dispensation; or the fact of Muhammad bin Qasim becoming a liberator of the toiling masses in Sindh; or the fact of Mahmud Ghaznavi becoming the defreezer of productive wealth hoarded in Hindu temples; or the fact of Muhammad Ghuri becoming the harbinger of an urban revolution; or the fact of Muinuddin Chishti becoming the great Indian saint; or the fact of Amir Khusru becoming the pioneer of communal amity; or the fact of Alauddin Khilji becoming the first socialist in the annals of this country; or the fact of Akbar becoming the father of Indian nationalism; or the fact of Aurangzeb becoming the benefactor of Hindu temples; or the fact of Sirajuddaula, Mir

Qasim, Hyder Ali, Tipu Sultan, and Bahadur Shah Zafar becoming the heroes of India's freedom struggle against British imperialism; or the fact of the Faraizis, the Wahabis, and the Moplahs becoming peasant revolutionaries and foremost freedom fighters?

One has only to go the original sources in order to understand the true character of Islam and its above-mentioned luminaries. And one can see immediately that their true character has nothing to do with that with which they have been invested in our school and college text-books. No deeper probe is needed for unraveling the mysteries of Nehruvian Secularism.

This is not the occasion to go into the implication of this Secularism vis-a-vis India's own spiritual vision, India's own cultural wealth, India's own national society, and India's own native nationalism. I have dealt with this theme elsewhere. Suffice it to say that the other face of this Secularism is Hindu-baiting, which profession has been perfected by many scholars, scribes, and politicians, and has so far proved immensely profitable. I need not give the names. The stalwarts in this field are very well known.

The Bombay Malayalee Samajam has, therefore, rendered a great service in providing a test case, that of Tipu Sultan, for exposing the true character of Nehruvian Secularism. To the best of my knowledge, this Secularism has never faced a challenge such as was posed before it by the scholars and men of public spirit whom we meet in the pages of this book, *Tipu Sultan; Villain or Hero?* The wealth of first-hand source materials presented in the articles that comprise this book, portray not only the base metal that was Tipu Sultan but also the components of that alchemy which has transmuted him into twenty-four carat gold. VOICE OF INDIA is proud that it should have the privilege of publishing this study of an arch villain being sold as a great hero.

The fight for truth which is described in this book, has proved fruitful. *The Statesman* dated May 24, 1933 reports: "Once again Tipu Sultan has become a controversial topic in Karnataka. First it was the serial produced by Sanjay Khan which attracted criticism and protests from people, now it is the bi-centenary of his death which has created quite a stir... the Karnataka Board of Wakfs has organized the bi-centenary, Urs-e-Sharif, of Hazrat Tipu Sultan Shaheed (R.A.), from May 21 to May 23 this year.... This has led to speculation that the Government will again spend several lakhs of rupees in 1999 to observe the 200th death anniversary of Tipu. The

State Government has, however, remained tightlipped over the issue and left the Board of Wakfs to answer these question.” Had there been no challenge to the serial, the State Government would not have remained tightlipped. It would have immediately untied its purse strings, and joined hands with the Board of Wakfs for singing hymns of praise to Hazrat and the Shaheed.

What the Hazrat and the Shaheed stood for is described by Mir Hussain Ali Kirmani in his book, *Nishan-i-Haidari*, which he completed in AD 1802, three years after Tipu’s death. Kirmani writes: “It happened one day that a Fakir (a religious mendicant), a man of saint-like mind, passed that way, and seeing the Sultan gave him a life-bestowing benediction, saying to him, ‘Fortunate child, at a future time thou will be the king of this country, and when thy time comes, remember my words—take this temple and destroy it, and build a masjid in its place, and for ages it will remain a memorial of thee.’ The Sultan smiled, and in reply told him that ‘whenever, by his blessing, he should become a Padishah, or King, he would do as he (the Fakir) directed’. When, therefore, after a short time, his father became a prince, the possessor of wealth and territory, he remembered his promise, and after his return from Nagar and Gorial Bunder, he purchased, the temple from the adorers of the image in it (which after all was nothing but the figure of a bull, made of brick and mortar) with their goodwill, and the Brahmins, therefore, taking away their image, placed it in the Deorhi Peenth, and the temple was pulled down, and the foundations of a new Masjid raised on the site...” That is the Masjid-i-Ala or Jama Masjid standing in Srirangapatnam on the site of a Shiva temple. One need not comment on Kirmani’s statement that Tipu “purchased the temple from the adorers of the image... with their goodwill”. It is not unoften that terror has produced this sort of goodwill in the minds of its helpless victims.

**SITA RAM GOEL**

NEW DELHI

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# THE SWORD OF TIPU SULTAN

Making darkness by closing one's eyes

V.M. KORATH

Former Editor of *Mathrubhoomi*

Historical novels are usually an admixture of historical facts and imagination. As such they are not expected to truthfully portray all the historical events. However, authors of historical novels have the moral responsibility to present historical facts without blatant distortions.

Mr. Bhagwan Gidwani, the author of the controversial novel, *The Sword of Tipu Sultan*, does not seem to be bound by any such ethical obligations; he does not have any qualms even to deliberately falsify historical facts. Therefore, a tele-serial based on such a novel also cannot be otherwise.

Mounting opposition to this controversial serial also stems from this basic reason.

## PSUEDO-RESEARCH

Mr. Gidwani claims that his novel is the result of thirteen years of historical research. He asserts that he has studied and scrutinized all the historical documents available from various sources in India and abroad. Then, why did not this researcher make any effort to visit Kerala, particularly Malabar region, the main area of Tipu Sultan's cruel military operations for a decade, or to scrutinize the historical evidence available from Malabar regarding the atrocities committed by Tipu Sultan, or to study the ruins of temple destroyed in Malabar during that period?

## AUTHOR'S CREDIBILITY

When a serious author is collecting historical data for writing a historical novel on Tipu Sultan, does he not have an obligation or responsibility to at least visit the Malabar region, the main area of the operations of Tipu Sultan, and try to understand the significance of his activities there? The mere fact that Mr. Gidwani did not bother to do so, is itself sufficient reason for suspecting the credibility and credentials of the author.

## IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF HIS FATHER

The major part of Tipu Sultan's rule was spent in conducting military operations for subjugating Malabar. Wars of territorial conquest waged in Malabar by Hyder Ali Khan, with the assistance of Ali Raja of Arackal and his Mappila followers of Cannanore, were intended more for spreading the Islamic faith by killing and forcible conversion of Hindus coupled with widespread destruction of Hindu temples, than for expanding his kingdom.

Hyder Ali Khan had expressed his satisfaction for these cruel achievements. A broad picture of atrocities committed against the Hindu population of Malabar by the army of Hyder Ali Khan along with the local Mappilas can be had from the diary notings of a Muslim officer of the Mysore army as edited and published by the then surviving son of Tipu Sultan, prince Ghulam Muhammed (Cited in *Malabar Manual*, William Logan).

Before his efforts to conquer the entire Malabar region could succeed, Hyder Ali Khan died in December, 1782. Tipu Sultan who succeeded his father, considered it his primary duty to continue this unfinished *jīhād* started by Hyder Ali Khan. However, the Islamic fanaticism of Tipu Sultan was much worse than that of his father. His war-cry of *jīhād* was "Sword" (death) or "Cap" (forcible conversion). This makes very clear the character of Tipu Sultan's military operations started in 1783. The intensity and nature of sufferings which the Hindu population had to bear during the nightmarish days of Padayottakkalam (military regime) were vividly described in many historical records preserved in the royal houses of Zamorin and Kottayam (Pazhassi), Palghat Fort and East India Company's office. There is no apparent reason to disbelieve them. It is absurd and against reason to describe all this evidence as being forged for the purpose of creating enmity between Hindus and Muslims (as presumed by Dr. C.K. Kareem and others).

During the cruel days of Islamic operations from 1783 to 1791, thousands of Nairs besides about 30,000 Brahmins had fled Malabar, leaving behind their entire wealth, and sought refuge in Travancore State (according to the commission of enquiry appointed by the British soon after Tipu Sultan's death).

This report was prepared exclusively for the information of the British authorities and not for writing a book, or for discrediting or defaming Tipu Sultan. Therefore, according to the learned historian, Dr. M. Gangadharan, there is no point in disbelieving the

validity of this report (*Mathrubhoomi Weekly*, January, 14–20, 1990): “Besides, there is enough evidence that a few members of Zamorin family and many Nairs were forcibly circumcised and converted into Muhammadan faith as well as compelled to eat beef.”

So far as the history of Malabar region is concerned, the most dependable book for basic historical facts is definitely the *Malabar Manual* written by William Logan. Serving in various administrative positions including that of a Collector for 20 years upto 1886, he had gone through and extensively researched a variety of documents for preparing his well-acclaimed book. The present edition has been scrutinized, edited and published by the reputed Muslim historian, Dr. C.K. Kareem, with the support of Cochin and Kerala universities. Therefore, the authenticity of its contents cannot be doubted.

There are plenty of references in the *Malabar Manual* about the cruel military operations and Islamic atrocities of Tipu Sultan in Malabar—forcible mass circumcision and conversion, large-scale killings, looting and destruction of hundreds of Hindu temples, and other barbarities.

If one accepts even a small portion of the Islamic atrocities described in this monumental work of history, then Tipu Sultan can be depicted only as fanatic Muslim bigot. The historical works of Col. Wilks (*Historical Sketches*), K.P. Padamanabha Menon and Sardar K.M. Panicker (Kerala History), Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai (research articles) and others, also do not project Tipu Sultan in any better light. One of the leading Congressman of pre-independence days, K. Madhava Nair, observes on page 14 of his famous book, *Malabar Kalapam* (Mappila outrage):

“The communal Mappila outrage of 1921 in Malabar could be easily traced to the forcible mass conversion and related Islamic atrocities of Tipu Sultan during his cruel military regime from 1783 to 1792. It is doubtful whether the Hindus of Kerala had ever suffered so much devastation and atrocities since the reclamation of Kerala by the mythological Lord Parasurama in a previous Era. Many thousands of Hindus were forcibly converted into Muhammadan faith.”

Since the same Congressman admitted that Tipu had not discriminated between Hindus and Muslims in Mysore and administered his country well, his observations about Kerala could be accepted as impartial comments.

In 1789, Tipu Sultan marched to Kozhikode with an army of 60,000, destroyed the fort, and razed the town to the ground. Gunddart says in his *Kerala Pazhama* that it is just not possible to describe the cruel atrocities perpetrated by the barbarian Tipu Sultan in Kozhikode.

William Logan gives in his *Malabar Manual* a long list of temples destroyed by Tipu Sultan and his army.

Elankulam Kunjan Pillai has recorded the situation in Malabar as follows:

“Kozhikode was then a centre of Brahmins. There were around 7000 Namboodiri houses of which more than 2000 houses were destroyed by Tipu Sultan in Kozhikode alone. Sultan did not spare even children and women. Menfolk escaped to forests and neighbouring principalities. Mappilas increased many fold (due to forcible conversion).

“During the military regime of Tipu Sultan, Hindus were forcibly circumcised and converted to Muhammadan faith. As a result the number of Nairs and Brahmins declined substantially.”

Atrocities committed in Malabar during the days of Tipu Sultan’s cruel military regime have been described in great detail in the famous works of many reputed authors—*Travancore State Manual* of T.K. Velu Pillai and *Kerala Sahitya Charitam* of Ulloor Parameshwara Iyer.

It is not absurd to condemn what all these respected authors have written about the atrocities of Tipu Sultan and label it as a deliberate attempt to defame him? All the historical documents of that period clearly indicate that Tipu Sultan’s attack on Malabar had some purpose other than simple territorial conquest. That purpose was to Islamicise the whole of Malabar by forcibly converting all the Hindus there.

#### THIS WAS AN ISLAMIC WAR

Even if we concede, for the sake of argument, that all those who call Tipu Sultan a fanatic Muslim are pro-British and all the historical data is meant only to create hatred between Muslims and Hindus, the letters written by Tipu Sultan himself help us to understand his real character. Some of these letters, obtained from India Office Library, London, were published in *Bhasha Poshini* magazine of Chingam 1099 (corresponding to August, 1923) by Sardar K.M. Panicker.

The letter dated March 22, 1788, to Kantancheri Abdul Kadir, and the letter dated December 14, 1788 to his army commander in Kozhikode, do not require further explanation about Tipu's real intentions in Malabar.

Still, if some people want to describe Tipu Sultan as an apostle of peace and religious tolerance, let us leave them alone—those large-hearted admirers of Tipu! However, there is quite a large number of people who are not that large-hearted, especially the descendants of those Hindus who were killed by the sword of the bloodthirsty Tipu while resisting forcible conversion and humiliation.

#### TIPU'S RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE—A POLITICAL GIMMICK

Tipu had committed a variety of atrocities on the Hindus in Malabar—barbarous mass-killing, wholesale forcible circumcision and conversion, and widespread destruction and plunder of Hindu temples. Being fully aware of this background, if Tipu is projected as a lover of Hindu religion and traditions and not as an intolerant Muslim fanatic, by citing some “new evidences” obtained by certain motivated historians and apologists of Islam such as the alleged land-grants to a few Hindu temples and Sringeri Mutt and protection of Sree Ranganatha Swami temple near the palace, then at the most they could be treated only as scandalous exceptions. Even this was part of a political strategy. Writing in *Mathrubhoomi Weekly* (January 14-20, 1990), Dr. M. Gangadharan says: “In the socio-religious-political conditions prevailing in Mysore of Tipu's days, such things could not be avoided. The financial assistance to Sringeri Mutt meant for conducting religious rites to ward off evil spirits, was clearly specified in the letter sent by Tipu Sultan. As such, these cannot be accepted as evidence of Tipu's respect for Hindu religion.”

#### SAME SITUATION IN MYSORE ALSO

The orchestrated propaganda that Tipu Sultan was tolerant and fair-minded towards the Hindus in Mysore is also without any foundation, as explained in history of Mysore written by Lewis Rice as well as M.M. Gopalrao. According to Lewis Rice, during the rule of Tipu Sultan, only two Hindu temples inside the Sreerangapatnam Fort were having daily *pujas* while the assets of all other temples were confiscated. Even in administrative matters,

Muslim bias was blatantly evident, especially in the matter of taxation policy. “Muslims were exempted from all taxes. Even those who were converted to Islamic faith were also allowed the same concessions,” says Gopal Rao. In the case of employment, Hindus were eliminated to the maximum extent possible. During the entire period of 16 years of Tipu Sultan’s rule, the only Hindu who had occupied any important official position was Purnaiyya.

#### NIGHTMARISH DAYS OF PADAYOTTAM (MILITARY REGIME)

However, Tipu and his Padayottam were a nightmare, especially for the Hindus of Malabar, whatever may be the arguments provided by Gidwani or the secularist historians who have specialized in proving a wolf to be a goat. There is no point in making it dark by closing one’s eyes.

Under these circumstances, a TV serial glorifying Tipu Sultan as a magnanimous person can only remind the Hindus of Malabar about the nightmare experienced by their forefathers during the cruel military regime of Tipu Sultan. That can, in turn, shatter the prevailing communal harmony and peace in Kerala.

Opposition to the proposed TV serial on Tipu Sultan is not inspired by religious sentiments alone. It is also not against anybody’s freedom to make a tele-serial based on a novel. It is the people’s objection and anger against the Government’s attempts to project a historical personality by suppressing, distorting and falsifying authentic historical evidence about his life and deeds. The official media like television and radio networks have certain basic obligations towards the public. Not to misguide the people, especially by falsification and distortion of recorded history, is the most important obligation. Therefore, projection of a tele-serial based on Gidwani’s scandalous novel is outside the broad framework of basic guidelines and objectives. That should not be allowed.

*Kesari* (Malayalam Weekly), February 25, 1990

## 2

# RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE OF TIPU SULTAN

LATE P.C.N. RAJA

### INTRODUCTION

Tipu Sultan had ruled his kingdom only for sixteen-and-a-half years, from December 7, 1782 to May 4, 1799. The territory of Malabar was under his effective control only for a short period of eight years. If he had not secured the assistance of the wily Purnaiyya, there would not have been so many Muhammadans in the state of Kerala and Karnataka. Hindus also would not have become less prosperous and fewer in number.

When that Brahmin Prime Minister, Purnaiyya, presented to Tipu Sultan 90,000 soldiers, three crore rupees, and invaluable ornaments made of precious stones, he was tempted to rule as the Emperor of the South India. Tipu did not consider the Hindu rulers of Maharashtra, Coorg and Travancore or the Muslim ruler Nizam as impediments. He was afraid of only the British. He had convinced himself that he could easily become the Emperor of South India if he could somehow vanquish the British. Because of his intense anti-British attitude, the so-called progressive and secular historians have made a vain attempt to paint Tipu Sultan as a great national hero.

Opposition to foreign powers need not always be due to love for one's country. To achieve his selfish goal and to face the British forces, Tipu Sultan sought the assistance of another foreign power, the French, who were manoeuvring to establish their own domination in the country. How is it possible, therefore, for Tipu Sultan to be an enemy of foreign forces when he himself had sought help from Napoleon who was then a prisoner in St. Helena Island and also the French King, Louis XVI?

Besides, he also wanted to establish Islamic rule in the country; to achieve that he had to first defeat the British. For this purpose, Tipu Sultan solicited the assistance of Muslim countries like Persia, Afghanistan and Turkey. It is true that Tipu did not harm the Raja of Cochin or anyone for that matter who surrendered and pledged loyalty to him. But how does that make him a friend of Hindus?

Tipu and the Nizam were the only Muslim rulers in the Deccan at that time and hence he wanted to avoid any dispute with the

Nizam. He insisted that the Nizam should agree to give his daughter in marriage to his son. But the Nizam, considering Tipu as an upstart with no aristocratic heredity, refused the offer. (According to Bhagwan Gidwani, Hyder Ali Khan had suggested earlier to the Nizam that he should agree to the marriage of his daughter to the young Tipu, then in his teens.) As if to spite the Nizam, Tipu Sultan got another of his sons married to the daughter of Arackal Bibi of Cannanore mainly to secure the loyalty of Malabar Muslims for subjugating the entire Malabar region. The result was for everybody to see in due course. It may be noted that the family of Arackal Bibi, though converted to Islam, followed the matriarchal system—a system which the Muslim fanatic, Tipu, wanted to reform.

#### HE WANTED TO BE A PADISHAH

He wanted to become an Emperor after defeating the British. He wanted to achieve his ambition after consulting the astrologers. There were a few Brahmin astrologers in Sree Ranganatha Swami Temple. They predicted that if some of the suggested remedial rituals were performed, Tipu would achieve his cherished ambition. Believing that he could become the undisputed ruler of the whole of South India, after defeating the British, he performed all the suggested rituals in the Sree Ranganatha Swami Temple, besides giving costly presents to the astrologers. This act is being widely interpreted by secularist historians as love and respect for Hindu religion and traditions! They also doubt if there were any Hindu temples which were desecrated or destroyed by Tipu Sultan and his Islamic army in Malabar.

The reputed historian, Lewis Rice, who wrote the *History of Mysore* after going through various official records, stated as follows: “In the vast empire of Tipu Sultan on the eve of his death, there were only two Hindu temples having daily pujas within the Sreerangapatnam fortress. It is only for the satisfaction of the Brahmin astrologers who used to study his horoscope that Tipu Sultan had spared those two temples. The entire wealth of every Hindu temple was confiscated before 1790 itself mainly to make up for the revenue loss due to total prohibition in the country.”

There are people who proclaim to the world that Tipu Sultan's rule was fair and progressive in his own state of Mysore. It would be appropriate to have a look at what a Mysorean, M.A. Gopal Rao, stated a few years ago in one of his articles: “In a deliberately

designed taxation scheme, the religious prejudice of Tipu Sultan became quite clear. His co-religionists, Muslims, were exempted from house tax, commodity tax and also the levy on other items of household use. Those who were converted to Muhammadanism, were also given similar tax exemptions. He had even made provisions for the education of their children. Tipu Sultan discontinued the practice of appointing Hindus in different administrative and military jobs as practised by his father, Hyder Ali Khan, in the past. He had deep hatred towards all non-Muslims. During the entire period of sixteen years of his regime, Purnaiyya was the only Hindu who had adorned the post of Dewan or minister under Tipu Sultan. In 1797 (two years before his death) among the 65 senior Government posts, not even a single Hindu was retained. All the Mustadirs were also Muslims. Among the 26 civil and military officers captured by the British in 1792 there were only 6 non-Muslims. In 1789, when the Nizam of Hyderabad and other Muslim rulers decided that only Muslims would be appointed henceforth in all Government posts, Tipu Sultan also adopted the same policy in his Mysore State. Just because they were Muslims, even those who were illiterate and inefficient, were also appointed to important Government posts. Even for getting promotions, one still had to be a Muslim under Tipu Sultan's regime. Considering the interest and convenience of only Muslim officers, all the records relating to tax revenue, were ordered to be written in Persian rather than in Marathi and Kannada as followed earlier. He even tried to make Persian the State language in place of Kannada. In the end all the Government posts were filled by lazy and irresponsible Muslims. As a consequence the people had to suffer a great deal because of those fun-seeking and irresponsible Muslim officers. The Muslim officers, occupying important posts at all levels, were all dishonest and unreliable persons. Even when people complained to him with evidences against those officers, Tipu Sultan did not care to inquire about the complaints lodged."

#### EVEN THE PLACE-NAMES WERE CHANGED

Gopal Rao had written all these on the basis of the writings of Tipu's own son, Ghulam Muhammad, and Muslim historians like Kirmani. Even the Hindu names of places, the Sultan could not tolerate. Therefore, Mangalapuri (Mangalore) was changed to Jalalabad, Cannanore (Kanwapuram) to Kusanabad, Bepur (Vaip-

pura) to Sultanpatanam or Faruqui, Mysore to Nazarabad, Dharwar to Quarshed-Sawad, Gooty to Faiz-Hissar, Ratnagiri to Mustafabad, Dindigul to Khaliqabad, and Calicut (Kozhikode) to Islamabad. It was after the death of Tipu Sultan that the local people reverted to old names.

#### ISLAMIC ATROCITIES IN COORG, BEDNUR, AND MANGALORE

The cruelties which Tipu Sultan committed in Coorg, has no parallel in history. On one occasion, he forcibly converted over ten thousand Hindus to Muhammadanism. On another occasion, he captured and converted to Islam more than one thousand Hindu Coorgis before imprisoning them in the Sreerangapatanam fortress. In the period of confusion and anarchy prevailing in Sreerangapatanam during the last war of Tipu Sultan against the British, all the Coorgi prisoners escaped from the prison and became Hindus again after reaching their native kingdom. Against the solemn oath given to the Raja of Coorg, Tipu Sultan forcibly abducted a young princess from the Coorg royal family and made her his wife against her will.

The atrocities committed by Tipu Sultan in Bindur in North Karnataka during and after its capture by him, were most barbarous and beyond description. Ayaz Khan who was Kammaran Nambiar from Chirackal Kingdom before his forcible conversion to Islam by Hyder Ali Khan, had been appointed as Governor of Bidnur. Tipu Sultan was jealous of and opposed to Ayaz Khan from the very beginning because Hyder Ali Khan had considered the latter more intelligent and smart. When Ayaz Khan learnt that Tipu Sultan was scheming to kill him secretly, he escaped to Bombay with plenty of gold. Tipu Sultan came to Bednur and forcibly converted its entire population to Islam. The people accepted Islam for the sake of their lives.

After the capture of Mangalore, thousands of Christians were also forcibly sent to Sreerangapatanam where all of them were circumcised and converted to Islam. Tipu Sultan's justification was that during the Portuguese domination, prior to the arrival of the British, many Muslims had been converted to Christianity by their Missionaries. He proudly proclaimed his action as a sort of punishment for the conversion of many Muslims by the Portuguese.

Then he marched upto Kumbla on the northern borders of Kerala, forcibly converting to Islam every Hindu on the way. This

time, his argument (repeated by the Muslim and secularist historians of today) was that if all belonged to one religion—Muhammadanism—there would be unity and consequently it would be easy to defeat the British!

#### INSIDE MALABAR

In Malabar, the main target of Tipu Sultan's atrocities were Hindus and Hindu temples. According to Lewis B. Boury, the atrocities committed by Tipu Sultan against Hindus in Malabar were worse and more barbarous than those committed against the Hindus in Hindustan by the notorious Mahmud of Ghazni, Alauddin Khalji, and Nadir Shah. He disputes in his book Mukherjee's version that Tipu Sultan had converted only his opponents. Normally even a cruel person kills or tortures only his enemies. But that argument does not justify the cruelties committed by him against innocent women and children.

#### DANCE OF THE ISLAMIC SATAN

According to the *Malabar Manual* of William Logan who was the District Collector for some time, Thrichambaram and Thalipparampu temples in Chirackal Taluqa, Thiruvangatu Temple (Brass Pagoda) in Tellicherry, and Ponmeri Temple near Badakara were all destroyed by Tipu Sultan. The *Malabar Manual* mention that the Maniyoor mosque was once a Hindu temple. The local belief is that it was converted to a mosque during the days of Tipu Sultan.

Vatakkankoor Raja Raja Varma in his famous literary work, *History of Sanskrit Literature in Kerala*, has written the following about the loss and destruction faced by the Hindu temples in Kerala during the military regime (Padayottam) of Tipu Sultan: "There was no limit as to the loss the Hindu temples suffered due to the military operations of Tipu Sultan. Burning down the temples, destruction of the idols installed therein and also cutting the heads of cattle over the temple deities were the cruel entertainments of Tipu Sultan and his equally cruel army. It was heart-rending even to imagine the destruction caused by Tipu Sultan in the famous ancient temples of Thalipparampu and Thrichambaram. The devastation caused by this new Ravana's barbarous activities have not yet been fully rectified."

## KOZHIKODE MADE A GRAVEYARD

As per the provisions of the Treaty of Mangalore of 1784, the British had allowed Tipu Sultan to have his suzerainty over Malabar. "In consequence, the Hindus of Malabar had to suffer the most severe enormities the world had ever known in history," observes K.V. Krishna Iyer, in his famous book, *Zamorins of Calicut*, based on historical records available from the royal house of Zamorins in Calicut. "When the second-in-line of Zamorins, Eralppad, refused to cooperate with Tipu Sultan in his military operations against Travancore because of Tipu's crude methods of forcible circumcision and conversion of Hindus to Islam, the enraged Tipu Sultan took a solemn oath to circumcise and convert the Zamorin and his chieftains and Hindu soldiers to Islamic faith," he adds.

L.B. Boury writes: "To show his ardent devotion and steadfast faith in Muhammaddan religion, Tipu Sultan found Kozhikode to be the most suitable place. It was because the Hindus of Malabar refused to reject the matriarchal system, polyandry and half-nakedness of women that the 'great reformer' Tipu Sultan tried to honour the entire population with Islam." To the Malabar people, the Muslim harem, Muslim polygamy and the Islamic ritual of circumcision were equally repulsive and opposed to the ancient culture and tradition in Kerala. Tipu Sultan sought a marriage alliance with the matriarchal Muslim family of Arackal Bibi in Cannanore. Kozhikode was then a centre of Brahmins and had over 7000 Brahmin families living there. Over 2000 Brahmin families perished as a result of Tipu Sultan's Islamic cruelties. He did not spare even women and children. Most of the men escaped to forests and foreign lands.

Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai wrote in the *Mathrubhoomi Weekly* of December 25, 1955: "Muhammadans greatly increased in number. Hindus were forcibly circumcised in thousands. As a result of Tipu's atrocities, strength of Nairs and Chamars (Scheduled Castes) significantly diminished in number. Namboodiris also substantially decreased in number."

The German missionary Gunttest has recorded: "Accompanied by an army of 60,000, Tipu Sultan came to Kozhikode in 1788 and razed it to the ground. It is not possible even to describe the brutalities committed by that Islamic barbarian from Mysore." C.A. Parkhurst also noted that "Almost the entire Kozhikode was razed to the ground."

## TEMPLES DESTROYED

Thali, Thiruvannur, Varackal, Puthur, Govindapuram, Thalikkunnu and other important temples in the town of Kozhikode as well as those nearby were completely destroyed as a result of Tipu's military operations. Some of them were reconstructed by the Zamorin after he returned following the defeat of Tipu Sultan in Sreerangapatanam and the Treaty of 1792.

The devastation caused by Tipu Sultan to the ancient and holy temples of Keraladheeswaram, Thrikkandiyoor and Thriprangatu in Vettum region was terrible. The Zamorin renovated these temples to some extent. The famous and ancient Thirunavaya Temple, known throughout the country as an ancient teaching-centre of the Vedas, revered by the devotees of Vishnu from Tamil Nadu, and existing before the advent of Christ, was also plundered and destroyed by Tipu's army (*Malabar Gazetteer*). After dismantling and destroying the idol, Tipu converted the Thrikkavu Temple into an ammunition depot in Ponnani (*Malabar Manual*). It was the Zamorin who repaired the temple later. Kotikkunnu, Thrithala, Panniyoor and other family temples of the Zamorin were plundered and destroyed. The famous Sukapuram Temple was also desecrated. Damage done to the Perumparampu Temple and Maranelira Temple of Azhvancherry Thamprakkal (titular head of all Namboodiri Brahmins) in Edappadu, can be seen even today. Vengari Temple and Thrikkulam Temple in Eranadu, Azhinjillam Temple in Ramanattukara, Indyanur Temple, Mannur Temple and many other temples were defiled and damaged extensively during the military regime.

Tipu Sultan reached Guruvayoor Temple only after destroying Mammiyoor Temple and Palayur Christian Church. If the destruction caused by Tipu's army is not visible today in the Guruvayoor Temple, it is mainly because of the intervention of Hydrose Kutty who had been converted to Islam by Hyder Ali Khan. He secured the safety of the temple and the continuation of land-tax exemption allowed by Hyder Ali earlier, besides the renovation and repairs done by the devotees later. According to available evidences, fearing the wrath of Tipu Sultan, the sacred idol of the Guruvayoor Temple was removed to the Ambalapuzha Sri Krishna Temple in Travancore State. It was only after the end of Tipu's military regime, that the idol was ceremoniously reinstated in the Guruvayoor Temple itself. Even today, daily *pujas* are conducted in Ambal-

apuzha Sri Krishna Temple where the idol of Guruvayoor Temple was temporarily installed and worshipped.

Damages caused to the nearby temples at Parampathali, Panmayanadu and Vengidangu are visible even today. The deplorable state of the architecture of the sanctum sanctorum of Parampathali Temple destroyed during the military operations of Tipu Sultan is really heart-rending. The atrocities committed in Kozhikode during the nightmarish days of the military occupation are vividly described in the works of Fra Bartolomaeo who had travelled through Kerala at that time. How cruelly Tipu Sultan, ably assisted by the French Commander M. Lally, had treated the Hindu and Christian population can be clearly understood from his writings.

#### TALKING RECORDS OF KERALA HISTORY

Govinda Pillai says in his famous book, *History of Literature*. “During Malayalam Era 965 corresponding to 1789-90, Tipu Sultan crossed over to Malabar with an army of uncivilised barbarians. With a sort of fanatical love for Islamic faith, he destroyed many Hindu temples and Christian churches which were the custodians of precious wealth and religious traditions. Besides, Tipu Sultan abducted hundreds of people and forcibly circumcised and converted them to Islam—an act which was considered by them as more than death.”

A small army of 2000 Nairs of Kadathanadu resisted the invasion of the huge army of Tipu Sultan from a fortress in Kuttipuram for a few weeks. They were reduced to starvation and death. Tipu Sultan entered the fort and offered to spare their lives, provided they accepted conversion to Islam. The unfortunate lot of 2000 Nairs were then forced to eat beef after being converted to Islamic faith, at the end of usual religious ritual of mass circumcision. All the members of one branch of Parappanad Royal Family were forcibly converted to Muhammadan faith except for one or two who escaped from the clutches of Tipu Sultan’s army. Similarly, one Thiruppad belonging to Nilamboor Royal Family was also forcibly abducted and converted to Islam. Thereafter, it was reported that further conversions of Hindus were attempted through those converts. In the end, when the Kolathiri Raja surrendered and paid tribute, Tipu Sultan got him treacherously killed without any specific reason, dragged his dead body tied to the feet of an elephant through the streets, and finally hanged him from a tree-top to show his Islamic contempt for Hindu Rajas.

It may be mentioned here that the entire Wodayar Royal Family of Mysore had been humiliated and kept in prison by Hyder Ali Khan and Tipu Sultan in their capital city, Sreerangapatanam. Even the Palghat Raja, Ettipangi Achan who had surrendered, was imprisoned on suspicion and later taken to Sreerangapatanam. Nothing was heard of him subsequently. Christians in Palghat fled out of fear. Tipu Sultan terrified the entire Hindu population in Malabar, stationing his army contingents in different regions for the purpose. The tax initially imposed by Hyder Ali Khan was forcibly collected by Tipu Sultan. Standing crops were confiscated. This act provoked even some influential Mappila landlords to revolt against Tipu Sultan.

Hyder Ali Khan had exempted temples from the payment of land tax. But Tipu Sultan forced the temples to pay heavy taxes. The famous Hemambika Temple at Kalpathi of the Palghat Raja who had surrendered to Hyder Ali Khan, the Kachamkurissi Temple of the Kollamkottu Raja who had deserted the Zamorin and sided with Hyder Ali Khan, and also the Jain Temple at Palghat suffered serious damages due to the cruel policies of Tipu Sultan.

Many Nair and Brahmin landlords fled the country leaving their vast wealth behind. The Mappilas forcibly took possession of their lands and wealth. Tipu Sultan did not object to their actions. Most of the Mappila landlords of today claim that they purchased the ownership of the landed properties from Nairs and Brahmins after paying heavy compensation. These blatant lies are being repeated by them in spite of the fact that practically nothing was paid to the Hindu landlords then or later. (The same Islamic treachery was repeated during the Mappila riots of 1921).

In any case, Tipu Sultan succeeded in mass killing, converting lakhs of Hindus to Islamic faith, driving thousands out of their traditional homes, and finally making the rest extremely poor. Many Hindus belonging to lower castes accepted conversion to Islam under duress. However, many others, especially the Thiyyas, fled to Tellicherry and Mahe for safety.

When the British established their rule in Malabar and the Hindu landlords made efforts to recover their landed properties, illegally occupied by the local Mappilas, Mullahs started preaching to their fanatic followers that “killing of Hindu landlords was a sacred Islamic act,” leading to frequent Mappila outrages in Malabar.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> During this period and upto the notorious Mappila riots 1921, there occurred over 45 minor/major Mappila riots of various dimensions and intensities.

In Cherunad, Vettathunad, Eranad, Valluvanad, Thamarassery and other interior areas, local Mappilas unleashed a reign of terror on the Hindu population, mainly to retain the illegally occupied land and to establish their domination over Hindus as during Tipu's regime. Fearing the organised robberies and violence, people could not even travel freely in the Malabar hinterland of predominantly Mappila population.

Lt. Col. E. Phitiyan, Andriansi, Mayan, K.P. Padmanabha Menon Sadasyathilakan T.K. Velu Pillai, Ullur Parameshwara Iyer, and other prominent people have described vividly the various types of atrocities committed by Tipu Sultan during the days of his Islamic rule in Malabar. There is no count of the wealth looted from Hindu temples and taken away by him to Sreerangapatnam. It is, therefore, very pitiable that a few shameless Hindus of today have come forward to orchestrate the nefarious propaganda of the fanatic Muslims, namely, that it was the imperialist divide-and-rule policy of the British that was responsible for blaming the Muslims for various atrocities committed against Hindus. This Big Lie was surreptitiously entered subsequently in history books and related records. It is obvious that these "Hindus" are speaking on the theme of Hindu-Muslim unity and praising the 'secular' credentials of the Muslim League, Tipu Sultan and Aurangzeb to the sky, not sincerely for the sake of Hindu-Muslim amity but only because of their inherent cowardice. They even proclaim that the notorious Mappila outrage of 1921 was part of the freedom struggle!

#### CONCLUSION

A few observations about the attack of Tipu Sultan on the Travancore State would be appropriate in this context. If the Nedunkotta had not been constructed earlier mainly to stop the danger from the powerful Zamorin, the same fate would have befallen the helpless Travancore State as well. Because of the above fortification, Tipu Sultan could wreak vengeance only in Angamally, Alwaye, Varapuzha, Alangod and other towns on the northern borders of Travancore State. That is what the Dewan of Travancore, Madhava Rao, had written in the history of Travancore. It may be emphasized here that he had relied on the original local records, not the ones published by the European historians. He wrote: "Whatever cruelties, the local Mappilas were desirous of indulging in the land, Tipu Sultan and his army of Muslim converts

did. The ancient and holy temples were heartlessly defiled or burnt down. The ruins of those temples destroyed by Tipu's fanatic army are the existing evidences of the atrocities committed by Muslims in the country. Christian churches also had to suffer widespread destructions. However, Tipu Sultan spared only the territories of Cochin Raja who had surrendered to Hyder Ali Khan in the beginning itself. Still, when Tipu Sultan and his army entered Parur and started firing at Kodungallur, the Cochin Raja sent a letter to the Travancore Raja requesting him 'to protect me and my family'." (A copy of the original letter was also published in the book.)

These are the recorded facts about the atrocities unleashed by Tipu Sultan during his military regime notoriously known as Padayottakalam. Poets have written a number of poems about the sufferings of the people and the land during those nightmarish days. The following was written by a member of the Katathanad Royal Family about the consequences of Padayottakalam:

"Oh Shiva! Shiva Lingam (idol) has gone (destroyed) from the temple, and also the Lingam (manliness) from the land."

(This is the English translation of the Malayalam article by P.C.N. Raja first published in *Kesari Annual* of 1964. The late Raja was a senior member of the Zamorin Royal Family.)

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## TIPU'S OWN TESTIMONY

C. NANDAGOPAL MENON

(The writer is convenor of Bombay Malayalee Samajam)

"If you love me, should you not put up with my weakness sometimes?"—Tipu Sultan is purported to have asked Mir Sadik who was one of his ministers. This is a remark invented by Bhagwan S. Gidwani in his controversial novel, *The Sword of Tipu Sultan*.

A cross-section of the new generation of historians and novelists is of the opinion that all the available documents and history books on Tipu Sultan originate from the British and, therefore, they cannot be relied upon, the ostensible policy of the British being to 'divide and rule'. Pointing to the correspondence between Shrimad Paramahansa Parivrajakacharya Shri Sankaracharya of Sringeri Mutt and Tipu Sultan during 1791-92 and 1798, they argue that Tipu was an apostle of secularism and as such respected Hindu religious heads and places of worship. Tipu is also identified as among the first nationalists who fought against the British to liberate the country.

However, the arguments fall apart if one goes through various letters and edicts issued by Tipu Sultan to various public functionaries, including his principal military commanders, the governors of forts and provinces, and diplomatic and commercial agents.

William Kirkpatrick, who compiled many of Tipu's letters, writes in his book, *Selected Letters of Tipoo Sultan* (published in 1811): "Tipoo knew his will to be a law the propriety of which... would never be questioned or doubted by any of his slaves... He probably measured the sentiments in question by a different standard from that with which we estimate them. Thus the various murders and acts of treachery which we see him directing to be carried into execution, were not criminal, but on the contrary just, and even meritorious, in his eyes."

#### GREAT VICTORY

Kirkpatrick continues: "The Koran taught him that it was not necessary to keep faith with infidels, or the enemies of the true religion, in which case it was not difficult for him to persuade him-

self that it was right to include all who opposed or refused to co-operate in his views for the extension of that religion; or, in other words, for his own aggrandisement.”

This observation of Kirkpatrick is found to be valid when one goes through the letter of January 19, 1790, sent to Budruz Zuman Khan by Tipu himself. It says: “Don’t you know I have achieved a great victory recently in Malabar and over four lakh Hindus were converted to Islam? I am determined to march against that cursed ‘Raman Nair’ very soon (reference is to Rama Varma Raja of Travancore State who was popularly known as Dharma Raja). Since I am overjoyed at the prospect of converting him and his subjects to Islam, I have happily abandoned the idea of going back to Srirangapatnam now” (K.M. Panicker, *Bhasha Poshini*, August, 1923).

In a letter dated 8th Eezidy (February 13, 1790) addressed to Budruz Zuman Khan, Tipu writes: “Your two letters, with the enclosed memorandums of the Naimar (or Nair) captives, have been received. You did right in ordering a hundred and thirty-five of them to be circumcised, and in putting eleven of the youngest of these into the Usud Ilhye band (or class) and the remaining ninety-four into the Ahmedy Troop, consigning the whole, at the same time, to the charge of the Kilaaddar of Nugr...” (*Selected Letters of Tipoo Sultan* by Kirkpatrick).

In a letter dated January 18, 1790 to Syed Abdul Dulai, Tipu writes: “With the grace of Prophet Mohammed and Allah, almost all Hindus in Calicut are converted to Islam. Only on the borders of Cochin State a few are still not converted. I am determined to convert them also very soon. I consider this as Jihad to achieve that object” (K.M. Panicker, *Bhasha Poshini*).

#### THEY SPEAK VOLUMES

The translation of the great seal of Tipu found in Major Alex Dirom’s comprehensive account of the Third Mysore War published as early as 1793 in London, reads as follows:

“I am the Messenger of the true faith.

“I bring Unto you the Edicts of Truth.

“From CONQUEST and the Protection of the Royal Hyder comes my title of SULTAN and the world under the Sun and Moon is subject to my Signet.”

The letters and the seal speak volumes of the mind of the man who wantonly roamed and terrorised South India and the south-

eastern borders of Maharashtra for a decade. It cannot be said that he did so because the Hindus were assisting the British.

The contention of a secularist section of historians and novelists that Tipu was a patriot since he fought the British, has no validity. The renowned historian, Dr. I.M. Muthanna, says in his *Tipu Sultan X-Rayed* that Tipu was a traitor as he invited the French to invade India. The letter, dated April 21, 1797, written by Tipu and classified as No. 4 in the Persian File of Records, and quoted by Muthanna in his book, reads:

“Citizen Representatives:

“Since I manifested my friendship in writing to you, my messengers have arrived with the following intelligence which will not be displeasing to you.

“The Nizam, an ally of the English, and the Chief of the Mughals, is very ill and his age leaves no prospect of his recovery. He has four children who are disputing the right of succession. One of them is much attached to me, (he) is the favourite of the chiefs of the people and is expected to succeed him.

“I inform these events in order to prove to you that it is now the moment for you to invade India. With little trouble we shall drive the British out of India. Rely on my friendship.

“Your ally (Sd) Tipu Sultan.”

That was Tipu’s expression of love for India!

The world-famous Portuguese traveller, Fr. Bartholomeo, not a Britisher, writes in his book *Voyage to East Indies*: “First a corps of 30,000 barbarians who butchered everybody on the way... followed by the field-gun unit under the French Commander, M. Lally... Tipu was riding on an elephant behind which another army of 30,000 soldiers followed. Most of the men and women were hanged in Calicut, first mothers were hanged with their children tied to necks of mothers. That barbarian Tipu Sultan tied the naked Christians and Hindus to the legs of elephants and made the elephants to move around till the bodies of the helpless victims were torn to pieces. Temples and churches were ordered to be burned down, desecrated and destroyed. Christian and Hindu women were forced to marry Mohammadans and similarly their men were forced to marry Mohammadan women.<sup>1</sup> Those Christian who re-

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<sup>1</sup> A non-Muslim marrying a Muslim woman becomes a Muslim under the “law” of Islam. Marrying a Muslim woman without getting converted to Islam invites death penalty under that “law”.

fused to be honoured with Islam, were ordered to be killed by hanging immediately. These atrocities were told to me by the victims of Tipu Sultan who escaped from the clutches of his army and reached Varappuzha, which is the centre of Carmichael Christian Mission. I myself helped many victims to cross the Varappuzha river by boats.”

#### COW-SLAUGHTER

“The Padayottam military occupation period won’t be forgotten by the Malayalis for generations. It was this invasion, between Malayalam era 957 to 967 (1782 to 1792) that turned Malayalam upside down,” says P. Raman Menon, biographer of Shaktan Tampuran, the King of Cochin during Tipu’s invasion. He adds: “There was hardly any cowshed left in Malayalam where the Mysore Tiger did not enter.” The reference is to the mass cow-slaughter carried out by Tipu’s army on his orders.

In 1783-84, 1788 and 1789-90, Tipu personally led the attacks on Malayalam (Kerala), besides sending his army contingents to various resistance spots during the intervening period. Well-known Muslim historian, P.S. Syed Muhammed, author of *Kerala Muslim Charitram* (History of Kerala Muslims), has this to say about these invasions: “What happened to Kerala because of Tipu’s invasion, reminds one of the invasion of Chengez Khan and Timur in Indian history.”

Vadakunkur Raja Raja Varma writes in *Kerala Samskrita Sahitya Charitram* (History of Sanskrit Literature in Kerala): “The number of temples destroyed during Tipu’s invasion is countless. It was the hobby of Tipu and his army to put the temples on fire, destroy the idols and indulge in cow-slaughter. The memory of destruction of the Talipparampu and Trichambaram temples aches the heart.”

According to the *Malabar Gazetteer*, the important temples in the towns of Tali, Srivaliyanatukavu, Tiruvannur, Varakkal, Puthur, Govindapuram, and Talikunnu were destroyed by Tipu’s ravaging armies. Even the Tirunavaya Temple known all over India as a centre of Rig Veda teaching was destroyed. Tipu personally ordered the destruction of Calicut which was the Capital of the Zamorin Rajas.

The record books maintained at the Vadakumnatha Temple of Trichur, *Zamorins of Calicut* by K.V. Krishna Iyer, and *Malabar*

*Manual* by William Logan also list hundreds of temples destroyed during Tipu's invasion.

#### FAITH IN ASTROLOGY

It is common knowledge that Tipu had immense faith in astrology. He used to keep a number of astrologers in his court who were asked to calculate the time auspicious for his invasions. It was at the appeals of these astrologers and his own mother that Tipu spared two temples out of more than a dozen within Srirangapatnam Fort. Moreover, by the end of 1790, Tipu was facing enemies from all sides. He was also defeated at the Travancore Defence Lines. It was then that in order to appease the Hindus of Mysore, he started giving land-grants to Hindu temples.

This view finds endorsement in the biography of the Diwan of Travancore, *Life History of Raja Kesavadas* by V.R. Parameswaran Pillai. Pillai writes: "With respect to the much-published land-grants I had explained the reasons about 40 years back. Tipu had immense faith in astrological predictions. It was to become an Emperor (Padushah) after destroying the might of the British that Tipu resorted to land-grants and other donations to Hindu temples in Mysore including Sringeri Mutt, as per the advice of the local Brahmin astrologers. Most of these were done after his defeat in 1791 and the humiliating Srirangapatnam Treaty in 1792. These grants were not done out of respect or love for Hindus or Hindu religion but for becoming Padushah as predicted by the astrologers."

Sanjay Khan, producer of the controversial TV serial on Tipu, contended in the beginning that there was no distortion in his serial (based on Gidwani's novel). He has now admitted in an interview to *The Week* that "Gidwani's novel may not be historically correct".

*Indian Express* (Bombay), March 10, 1990

# TIPU SULTAN: AS KNOWN IN KERALA

RAVI VARMA

## INTRODUCTION

Of late there has been a concerted attempt to distort and falsify recorded Indian history, very often even by painting dark periods of Indian history as glorious and progressive, to suit the selfish and perverted interests of the ruling clique. One of these attempts relates to the life and deeds of Tipu Sultan of Mysore. Most of his active life as Sultan of Mysore was spent in Kerala, waging wars of territorial annexation and Islamic conversions. Therefore, the true character of Tipu Sultan can be best judged from his activities in Kerala. The following is an earnest attempt to present Tipu Sultan as known from the available records of Kerala history.

## HISTORICAL REFERENCES

There is ample evidence, available in many authentic records of his military operations in Kerala, to show that Tipu Sultan of Mysore was a fanatic Muslim tyrant who was responsible for the destruction of hundreds of Hindu temples, large-scale forcible conversion of the Hindus, and perpetration of unimaginable brutalities on the Hindu population in Kerala. All the available records such as *Malabar Manual* of William Logan, *Historical Sketches* of Col. Wilks, *Voyage to East Indies* of Fra Bartolomaeo, histories of Kerala written by K.P. Padmanabha Menon and Sardar K.M. Panicker, historical research papers of Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai, official reports of the English Company, and the records of Chirackal, Zamorin and Palghat royal families besides those from Trichur, Guruvayoor, Thirunavaya and Perumanam temples, clearly and conclusively depict Tipu Sultan as the most intolerant, cruel, and fanatic Muslim ruler in the South. His main object, like his father Hyder Ali Khan's, was to subjugate the whole of Kerala and convert its Hindu population to Islamic faith by force. Tipu Sultan's notorious *jibād*—Islamic war-slogan—was SWORD (death) or CAP (Islamic honour, i.e. forcible conversion), a cruel option for a hapless Hindu population. For this, his most dependable and obedient accomplices were his equally cruel and treacherous co-religionists—the Mappilas (local Muslim converts) of North Malabar.

## NATIONAL INSULT

The ruins of hundreds of Hindu temples destroyed, and heavy concentration of Mappilas, all along the invasion routes of Tipu's army, are standing and conclusive proofs of the brutalities and atrocities committed by the fanatic Tipu Sultan in Kerala. He was, all through, waging a cruel Islamic war against the Hindu population of Kerala, with a large Muslim army under Muslim field commanders ably assisted by the French, and with powerful field-guns and European troops. The period of Tipu Sultan and his father Hyder Ali Khan from 1766 to 1792 is the darkest period in Kerala history for all types of Islamic atrocities including forcible conversion. In spite of all these, historical documents and records are being deliberately suppressed, distorted and falsified in order to project this fanatic Tipu Sultan of Mysore as a liberal and magnanimous Muslim king. Worse still, this Muslim tyrant from Mysore is being glorified and projected as a national hero like Chhatrapati Shivaji, Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Rana Pratap Singh, and Pazhassi Raja of Kerala. To perpetuate the memory of this tyrant Tipu Sultan, the Central Government has released a postal stamp. Doordarshan has sanctioned a video serial to glorify the deeds and life of Tipu Sultan. And a special rehabilitation programme is being worked out for the benefit of the descendants of Tipu Sultan in Calcutta. It is an insult to our national pride and also to the Hindus of Kerala. At this rate, who knows that tomorrow our secular Government and the motivated Muslim and Marxist historians of Jawaharlal Nehru, Aligarh and Islamia universities will not project as national heroes villains like Mahmud Ghaznavi who destroyed the Somnath Temple, Babar who destroyed the Sri Rama Temple at Ayodhya, and Aurangzeb who destroyed the Vishwanath Temple at Kashi and the Sri Krishna Temple at Mathura? What a shame! What a degradation!

## SOURCE REFERENCE

Now, let us turn to the facts of history, compiled and presented in *Malabar Manual* of William Logan published over a hundred years ago. William Logan was Collector of Malabar and worked in various capacities for over twenty years in Kerala, before 1886. The highly acclaimed *Malabar Manual* was the result of this strenuous research and study of various official records, oral history, and legends of Kerala. Because the facts presented here are mainly from

the *Malabar Manual* as edited by Dr. C.K. Kareem,<sup>1</sup> himself a Muslim, and published by the Charitram Publications of Trivandrum with the assistance of Kerala and Cochin universities, we are sure, they will be more acceptable as authentic and unbiased than any other version of Kerala history.

To give the background of Tipu Sultan's wars and Islamic atrocities in Kerala, it would be better to start from Hyder Ali Khan, Tipu's father.

#### HYDER ALI KHAN

After the decline and disintegration of the Vijayanagaram Empire, Raja Wodeyar enlarged his small principality into a mighty kingdom and established the Wodeyar Dynasty with Srirangapatnam as its capital (1578-1761). Lord Shree Ranganatha Swamy was the family deity of the Wodeyar family and, therefore, a magnificent temple dedicated to this God was constructed there. Since then, the capital city came to be known by the name of the presiding deity of the place. The last king of the Wodeyar Dynasty was Krishna Raya who was overthrown by Hyder Ali Khan, his army chief stationed in Dindigal, with the help of the wily Purnaiyya. Hyder Ali imprisoned all the royal family members in Srirangapatnam. Later on, he declared himself the Sultan of Mysore with Srirangapatnam as capital in 1761 (p. 456 of *Malabar Manual*). It may be noted here that Hyder Ali Khan's father was a Punjabi Muslim settled in Mysore and serving as a soldier with the rank of 'naik' in the army.

#### INVASION OF KERALA BY HYDER ALI

During that period, there were a number of small kingdom in Malabar. Among them, the important ones were those of Kottayam (Pazhassi) Raja, Kolathiri (Chirackal) Raja, Kadathand Raja in North Malabar, and Zamorin in South Malabar. There was also a Muslim ruler under Kolathiri Raja. He controlled the sea trade through Cannanore port. The seniormost male member of the Arackal Muslim family was known as Ali Raja while the seniormost

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Kareem is a scholar and has secured his Ph. D from Aligarh Muslim University with a research thesis on Administration of Kerala under Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan. He has also written a number of articles exonerating Mahmud Ghaznavi, Nadir Shah and Aurangzeb of their well-recorded atrocities, forcible conversions and temple-destructions in India. He believes that pious and magnanimous Muslim rulers, could never do such things!

female member was referred to as Arackal Bibi. The family originated from the Hindu royal family of Chirackal or Kolathiri. Though converted to Islam years back, the Arackal family followed their original matriarchal system as prevalent in Kerala. And though Ali Raja was a subordinate chieftain under Kolathiri Raja, he used to disobey the authority of Kolathiri quite often.

When Hyder Ali Khan overran Mangalore and reached the northern borders of Malabar, Ali Raja invited and persuaded him to subjugate the Hindu Rajas of North Malabar and offered his assistance. But it was only after regrouping and equipping his army with more powerful field-guns that Hyder Ali Khan launched the long-expected Malabar invasion in 1766. After reaching Cannanore, he appointed Ali Raja as his Naval Chief (High Admiral) and the Raja's brother Sheik Ali as Chief of Port Authority (Intendant of Marine). After that, Ali Raja and his brother served Hyder Ali Khan on land and sea and aided all his military operations with a body of over 8,000 Mappilas (Muslim converts—name derived from Macca Pillai, Ma-Pilla). None of the Hindu Rajas in Malabar at that time was under the tutelage of the British or any other European power. The English Company, with its headquarters in Madras and Bombay, had only some pockets of influence in Mangalore and Tellicherry. The Kerala coast was under the influence of the Dutch and the French who were established in Cochin and Mahe respectively. Thus Hyder Ali's invasion of Kerala was not to fight and defeat the British, but to subjugate the independent Hindu kingdoms and for conversions to Islam. Neither Hyder Ali Khan nor Tipu Sultan is known to have attacked any of the British establishments in Kerala at any time.

#### ATROCITIES UNDER HYDER ALI

During his southward march of conquest and plunder, Hyder Ali allowed Ali Raja and his barbarous Mappilas to act as army scouts and also to commit all sorts of atrocities on the Hindu population of Malabar. The Kolathiri Raja could not offer much resistance against the huge army of Hyder Ali which was equipped with heavy field guns. On the other hand, Ali Raja who had been made a tributary chieftain in Cannanore, seized and set fire to the palace of the old Kolathiri Raja. The latter escaped with his followers and sought protection of the British in Tellicherry. Hyder Ali now entered Kottayam (Pazhassi) Raja's territory where he encoun-

tered resistance. There were casualties on both sides. But the Kottayam Mappilas betrayed and deserted their Hindu king and assisted Hyder Ali Khan (p. 460).

The first serious resistance encountered by the invading army of Hyder Ali Khan was in Kadathanad. The devastation caused by him during his wars in Kerala was typical of fanatic Muslim invaders anywhere in India. A broad picture of his Islam atrocities as described by a Muslim officer of Mysore army in his diary and as edited by Prince Ghulam Muhammad, the eleventh and only surviving son of Tipu Sultan, is given below. (Prince Ghulam Muhammad was later on exiled to Calcutta by the British after the death of Tipu Sultan in 1799.)

“Nothing was to be seen on the roads for a distance of four leagues, nothing was found but only scattered limbs and mutilated bodies of Hindus. The country of Nairs [Hindus] was thrown into a general consternation which was much increased by the cruelty of the Mappilas who followed the invading cavalry of Hyder Ali Khan and massacred all those who escaped without sparing even women and children; so that the army advancing under the conduct of this enraged multitude [Mappilas] instead of meeting with continued resistance, found villages, fortresses, temples and every habitable place forsaken and deserted (p. 461).

“Wherever he (Hyder Ali Khan) turned, he found no opponent; and every inhabitable place was forsaken and the poor inhabitants who fled to the woods and mountains in the inclement season experienced anguish to behold their houses in flames, fruit-trees cut down, cattles destroyed and temples burnt. By means of Brahmin messengers despatched to woods and mountains, Hyder Ali Khan promised pardon and mercy to the Hindus who had fled. However, as soon as the unfortunate Hindus returned on his promise of mercy and pardon, Hyder Ali Khan, like all the other Muslim tyrants of North India, saw to it that were all hanged to death, their wives and children reduced to slavery (p. 468).

“Before quitting the country (Kerala) Hyder Ali Khan by a solemn edict declared the Nairs deprived of all (social and political) privileges and (ordered ) not to carry arms. This ordinance was found to make the submission of the proud Nairs absolutely impossible because they would have thought death preferable to such humiliations and degradation. Therefore, Hyder Ali Khan by another ordinance, consented to restore all social and political privi-

leges including carrying of arms, to the Nairs who embraced the Mohammadan religion. Many nobles had to embrace Islam; but a significantly large section (Nairs, Chieftains and Brahmins) chose rather to take refuge in the kingdom of Travancore in the South than to submit to the last ordinance" (p. 469).

It may be noted here that when Hyder Ali Khan reached Calicut with his huge army, destroying everything on the way and forcibly converting to Islam every Hindu warrior defeated or captured, the ruling Zamorin, after sending away all his family members to Travancore State, committed self-immolation by setting fire to his palace and ammunition depot nearby, in order to escape personal humiliation and possible forcible conversion to Islam.

#### TIPU SULTAN

Hyder Ali Khan had thus attempted and to some extent succeeded in converting a sizeable section of Hindus, especially Nairs and Thiyyas, to Islam by force and treachery. However, as soon as he left Malabar, all Hindu Rajas, Chieftains and Nairs revolted and asserted their independence. He died in December, 1782, and his son, Tipu Sultan, succeeded him in Srirangapatnam. Tipu was also a fanatic Muslim king, but more cruel and inhuman than his father in his Islamic wars and conversions in Kerala.

By the time Tipu became the Sultan of Mysore towards the end of 1782, all the Rajas and Chieftains of North Malabar had revolted and declared their independence. The British had also become more powerful. The immediate object of Tipu's early military operation was to subjugate and retake the principalities which had revolted against the Mysore suzerainty immediately after the departure of Hyder Ali Khan from Malabar. So far, the Brahmins who were by nature quiet and honest, were usually and customarily sent as messengers to high places. But because of Tipu's orders to "seize, circumcise and convert the Brahmins to Islam", they started refusing to carry his messages to Malabar. They refused to oblige even the British who had extended and promised full protection to them. It had been confirmed from Calicut that 200 Brahmins had been "seized, confined, made Muslims and forced to eat beef and do other things contrary to their customs". (p. 507).

#### ISLAMIC BRUTALITIES

According to the official report of Col. Fullarton of the British forces stationed in Mangalore, worst type of brutalities on Brahmins

were committed by Tipu Sultan in 1783 during his siege of Palghat Fort which was being defended by the Zamorin and his Hindu soldiers. “Tipu’s soldiers daily exposed the heads of many innocent Brahmins within sight from the fort for Zamorin and his Hindu followers to see. It is asserted that the Zamorin rather than witness such enormities and to avoid further killing of innocent Brahmins, chose to abandon the Palghat Fort” (p. 500).

As he proceeded with his Islamic wars against the Hindu population in Kerala, Tipu Sultan committed many more brutalities. The Rajas were unable to resist. But they did not like to be mute witnesses to brutalities perpetrated by the Muslim army of Tipu. As a consequence, the Kadathanad and Kottayam Rajas sent requests to the English Company at Tellicherry for protection, stating that “they could no longer trust Tipu Sultan and beseeching the Company to take the Brahmins, the poor and the whole kingdom under their protections” (p. 507).

But the British did not render any help to the Hindu Rajas. Tipu’s brutalities were against all sections—Brahmins, Nair and Thiyyas of Hindu community, not excluding even women and children. Even Christians were not spared.

“It was not only against the Brahmins who were thus put in a state of terror of forcible circumcision and conversion; but against all sections of Hindus. In August, 1788, a Raja of the Kshatriya family of Parappanad and also Trichera Thiruppad, a chieftain of Nilamboor, and many other Hindu nobles who had been carried away earlier to Coimbatore by Tipu Sultan, were forcibly circumcised and forced to eat beef. Nairs in desperation, under the circumstances, rose up against their Muslim oppressors under Tipu’s command in South Malabar and the Hindus of Coorg in the North also joined them (p. 507).

“The revolt in the South Malabar was led by Ravi Varma of the Zamorin family. Though Tipu conferred on him a jaghire (vast area of tax-free land) mainly to appease him, the Zamorin prince, after promptly taking charge of the jaghire, continued his revolt against the Mysore power, more vigorously and with wider support. He soon moved to Calicut, his traditional area of influence and authority, for better co-ordination. Tipu sent a large Mysore army under the command of M. Lally and Mir Asrali Khan to chase and drive out the Zamorin prince from Calicut. However, during the above operations, Ravi Varma assisted not less than 30,000 Brah-

mins to flee the country and take refuge in Travancore” (p. 508).

It may be pointed out here that almost all female members and many male members of different royal families such as Chirackal, Parappanad, and Calicut, and chieftains’ families like Punnathoor, Nilamboor, Kavalapara, Azhvancherry Thamprakal etc., fled to Travancore to escape the brutalities of Tipu’s army and temporarily settled down in different parts of Travancore. Even after the fall of Tipu Sultan’s regime in Srirangapatnam, many of these families, wholly or partly, preferred to stay back in Travancore because of the Mappilas’ atrocities in the past.

The continued resistance and revolt by the Nairs and other chieftains enraged Tipu Sultan who gave strict orders to his army under M. Lally and Mir Asrali Khan to “surround and extricate the whole race of Nairs from Kottayam to Palghat” (p. 508). After entrusting Calicut to a powerful army contingent, he instructed it “to surround the woods and seize the heads of all Nair factions”. He then proceeded to North Malabar to suppress the spreading revolt under Kadathanad and Pazhassi Rajas. Prior to this, Tipu had sent a formal request to the English Company at Tellicherry asking them “not to give protection and shelter to Nairs fleeing from South Malabar” (p. 509). A similar letter had been sent to the English Company in Tellicherry by Hyder Ali Khan in 1764 before he launched his Malabar invasion (*Kerala History* by A.S. Sreedhara Menon, p. 372). These letters clearly show that neither Hyder Ali nor Tipu was at war with the British.

It was at Kuttipuram, the headquarters of the Kadathanad Rajas, that the huge army of Tipu Sultan with a large number of field-guns surrounded an old fort defended by a small contingent of Nairs. After several days of resistance, and finding it difficult to defend the fort any longer, the Nairs submitted to the usual terms of surrender—“a voluntary profession of the Mohammadan faith or a forced conversion with deportation from the native land... in short, either way they had to embrace Mohammadan faith!... The unhappy Nair captives gave a forced consent and on the next day, the Islamic initiation rite of circumcision was performed on all male members, closing the ceremony after every individual of both sexes was forced to eat beef” (p. 510).

If this was not an Islamic war, what else was it? Do forcible circumcision and feeding of beef form any part of normal wars of territorial aggression? The War that Tipu Sultan waged in Kerala,

was a cruel Islamic war against the Hindu population, mainly for conversion of Hindus by force. Yet there are degenerate Hindus in Kerala who admire Tipu Sultan as a hero!

The doings of Tipu Sultan were held out as an example which other detachments of the Mysore army followed. An original order sent to various army contingents by Tipu was found among the records from Palghat Fort, after its capture by the English Company in 1790. It has been reproduced as a footnote on page 510 of the *Malabar Manual*: "It directed (all military detachments) that every being in the district should be honoured with Islam, that they should be traced to their hiding places, and that all means, truth or falsehood, fraud or force, should be employed to effect their universal conversion to Islam."

While escaping from Tipu's army, one of the princes of the Chirackal Royal family in North Malabar was captured and killed in an encounter after a chase of few days. As per the accounts of Tipu's own diary and as confirmed by the English Company records, the body of the unfortunate prince was treated with great indignities by Tipu Sultan. "He had the dead body of the prince dragged by elephants through his camp and it was subsequently hung up on a tree along with seventeen of his followers who had been captured alive" (p. 512). Another chieftain, Korangoth Nair, who had resisted Tipu, was finally captured with the help of the French and hanged.

Such was the treatment meted out to Hindu nobles, chieftains and their followers by Tipu Sultan of Islamic faith. He was no different from other Muslim tyrants who had played havoc in North India such as Mahmud Ghaznavi, Nadir Shah, Timur, Aurangzeb and Kala Pahar of Bengal.

After solemnising the marriage<sup>2</sup> between the daughter of Arackal Bibi and his son, Abdul Khalic, and conferring a portion of the Chirackal principality on her, Tipu Sultan proceeded to the South to subjugate Travancore and convert more Hindus to Islam. The persuasions and threats he delivered to the Zamorin and the Cochin Raja to wage wars against Travancore, either directly or on his behalf, did not succeed because Tipu was regarded by all Hindu Rajas and nobles as a fanatic Muslim. The Cochin Raja, though a tributary to Mysore, avoided meeting Tipu, fearing forc-

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<sup>2</sup> This marriage alliance was formed by Tipu in order to gain the confidence and support to the Mappilas.

ible conversion when invited for a special meeting. At the same time, he continued to send his tribute to Tipu as usual while secretly assisting Travancore to build and strengthen the long defence line (Nedunkotta Fort) through Cochin territory against the Mysore army (p. 516).

#### INVASION OF TRAVANCORE

Travancore had an alliance (Treaty of Mangalore) with the English Company according to which “an aggression against Travancore would be viewed as equivalent to declaration of war against the English” (p. 566). The Dutch who were afraid of Tipu also agreed to transfer the Kodungallur Fort to Travancore, mainly as a strategy to involve the more powerful British in case of war with Travancore on that account. Since Cochin was considered a tributary to Mysore, Tipu objected to the transfer of Kodungallur Fort which was part of Cochin territory before its occupation by the Dutch. Therefore, Tipu Sultan demanded to Travancore to (i) allow free access to Kodungallur because the Travancore defence line had stretched and passed through Cochin territory, and (ii) surrender all Hindu Rajas and nobles from Malabar who had taken refuge in Travancore. But the demand was rejected. That was his pretext for waging a war against the Travancore State. In the meantime, the Cochin Raja, who was under the guidance and protection of the weak Dutch, openly shook off his tributary links with Tipu and aligned with Travancore after the firm offer of support and protection by the British. It may be noted here that Tipu never fought against the British in Kerala. He fought only against the Hindu Rajas. His hostilities against the British were stepped up only when his ally, the French, waged wars against the British in Europe or his own kingdom was threatened.

#### TIPU CRIPPLED AND DEFEATED

The Travancore Raja replied to Tipu explaining that he did what he did as per the advice of the British (p. 517). That provoked Tipu. He launched an attack against Travancore but was defeated in January, 1790. According to Mr. Powney who was the Resident Representative of the English Company in Travancore, Tipu’s attack was not only effectively stopped by the Travancore army, Tipu himself fell down from the rampart, was seriously wounded, and was rendered permanently lame during the counter-attack by the Travancore forces.

Tipu and his army were camping on the banks of the Alwaye river before launching the attack on the Travancore defence lines (Nedunkotta Fort). The Travancore army was no match for the huge Mysore army and the monsoon season was four or five months away. Therefore, under the guidance of Raja Kesavadas, the Prime Minister of Travancore, a temporary bund was constructed way up on the stream by a team headed by Kalikutty Nair. When the Mysore army launched its assault and Nedunkotta was penetrated, the temporary bund was breached in the midst of heavy fighting, causing an unexpected flood which drowned many Mysore soldiers and rendered the gunpowder wet and useless. The result was panic and confusion in the Mysore army. The triumphant Nair forces of Travancore inflicted heavy casualties on the invading army. But the valiant Kalikutty Nair was also drowned in the sudden surge of water and became a martyr.

That was the first time, January 1, 1790, when Tipu Sultan tasted a humiliating defeat. It is recorded in Travancore history and also confirmed by the local folklore that as the wounded Tipu was lying unconscious in the battlefield he was rescued by a Nair soldier who quietly carried the unconscious Sultan to the Mysore military camp during the night and left quickly (p. 518). The brave Nair soldier could have easily killed the unconscious Tipu as many Muslims have done to a Hindu in similar circumstances; but his Hindu values of life prompted him to deposit the helpless victim near the Muslim camp.

According to authentic historical records, the Nair forces of Travancore attacked the Mysore army which was crossing the defence fortification, and inflicted heavy casualties on it. The sudden and unexpected attack made the Mysore Army panicky, and in the confusion Tipu Sultan fell down from the ramparts of the fort into the ditch below along with his palanquin. The fall made him permanently lame. Later on, the Travancore forces recovered from the ditch the sword, the pallanquin, the dagger, the ring and many other personal effects of Tipu and presented them to the Dharma Raja. Some of Tipu's personal weapons and ornaments were sent to the Nawab of Arcot on his request (*Travancore History* by P. Sankunni Menon, published by Kerala Bhasha Institute, Trivandrum, pp. 191-92).

## TIPU'S SECOND DEFEAT

Tipu retreated and sent for reinforcements from Coimbatore and Srirangapatnam. He also “recalled all his Muslim troops despatched earlier to different parts of South Malabar to hunt down and forcibly circumcise the Hindus and convert them” (p. 518). After regrouping and reinforcing his army, Tipu mounted another attack in March 1790 in order to demolish the Travancore defence line. He reached upto Veropally (Varapuzha) near Alwaye. Meanwhile, following firm assurance of support and protection by the English Company who had by this time extended their military power and political influence to the entire West Coast and South India, some of the important Malabar Rajas such as Pazhassi Raja, Kolathiri Raja and Kadathanad Raja, returned to their respective kingdoms and asserted their independence from Mysore suzerainty. The Cochin Raja shook off his tributary link with Mysore. The Zamorin and the Palghat Raja were promised help by the British in their opposition to the Mysore Sultan, with the promise of restoring their lost territories to them after the defeat of Tipu. All the Hindu Rajas and nobles had thus joined hands with the British against the war efforts of Tipu mainly because of his Islamic atrocities against the Hindus in Kerala. Revolt against the Mysore occupation forces broke out all over Malabar and spread to Coorg with the return of the chieftains to their respective areas. Before the end of 1790, the British captured Palghat Fort and secured the communication channel from Coimbatore to the West Coast for assisting the Travancore forces against the Mysore army. All along, Tipu's forces assisted by the Mappilas were devastating and plundering the entire country as per the recorded version of Martab Khan, Commander of the Mysore army.

By the time Tipu Sultan launched his second attack and demolished parts of Nedungotta in May 1790, heavy monsoon rains caused the Alwaye river to flood the countryside. Since the Mysore army was not accustomed to fighting during rainy season, it was easy for the Travancore army to defeat Tipu's army. That was the second defeat Tipu suffered near Alwaye in 1790.

In the meantime, Lord Cornwallis, the Governor General, himself assumed the command of the British forces and pushed forward towards Srirangapatnam, headquarters of Tipu Sultan. Simultaneously, the Maratha and the Nizam's forces also advanced from different directions. The final assault was mounted and Sriran-

gapatanam surrounded in January-February 1791 by a combined army consisting of the British, Maratha and the Nizam's forces. Tipu Sultan, who rushed to Srirangapatnam, abandoning his military operations against Travancore, was forced to sign a treaty in 1792 ceding the entire West Coast and half of his other possessions to the Allies, thus relieving the Hindus of Kerala from further Islamic brutalities.

#### ROLE OF THE BRITISH

It may be noted here that the Maharaja of Travancore had kept the British Governor of Madras informed about the political developments and the imminent military operation of Tipu Sultan against Travancore. But the then Governor of Madras, Mr. Holland, in spite of the obligations under the Treaty of Mangalore, specifically instructed the British contingents sent to the Travancore borders, not to assist the Travancore forces in case of war. When the Governor General, Lord Cornwallis, heard about Travancore's victory over Tipu's forces, he assumed at first that it was due to the active assistance rendered by the English Company. But later on, he came to know about the dubious actions and the corrupt character of Mr. Holland. The Governor of Madras was believed to be in the pay of Tipu Sultan. So he was relieved of his responsibilities and Lord Cornwallis himself assumed command of the Madras Army. The military operations against Srirangapatnam culminated in Tipu's surrender and the Treaty of Srirangapatnam signed in 1792. But as far as Tipu's defeat and humiliation on the borders of Travancore were concerned, the British played no role; the entire credit for the victory goes to the strategy of Raja Kesava Das and the valiant soldiers of the Travancore army. The British not only did not keep their solemn promise to the Malabar kings and chieftains, but also insisted that Travancore should pay heavily for the British "help".

#### DEATH OF TIPU SULTAN

The death scene of Tipu Sultan in 1799 has been completely distorted in Gidwani's infamous novel. He projects Tipu as a hero and a martyr. But as per recorded documents and official versions, Tipu, deserted by his generals and surrounded by the Allied forces, mounted a horse and tried to escape in the night like a coward. He was hit in the crossfire between his personal guards and the enemy

forces, and fell down from the rampart in the midst of dead bodies of common soldiers. Later in the evening, a search was made for Tipu's body with the help of torches. His body was finally recovered by one of his slaves and identified by the Khilledar (*Tipu Sultan X-rayed* by Dr. I.M. Muthanna, p. 386).

Another version (by C.R.N. Murthi) is that while a bullet hit Tipu who was lying helplessly in a semi-conscious state, one of his lieutenants tried to rob the emerald chain from his turban. Tipu seized a sword and cut off the leg of the robber who, in turn, shot his master dead (*Tipu Sultan X-rayed* by Dr. I.M. Muthanna, p. 392).

#### END OF THE USURPER DYNASTY

It may be recalled here that the members of the overthrown Wodeyar Royal Family were kept prisoners in their palaces all through the reign of Hyder Ali Khan and Tipu Sultan. Tipu did not kill them because of his fear of a popular uprising against him. His eleventh and only surviving son, Prince Ghulam Muhammad, was exiled by the British to Calcutta and the Mysore Kingdom which had been usurped by Hyder Ali Khan, was restored to the Wodeyars. However, Prince Ghulam Muhammad was allowed to take away with him a part of the wealth looted from Malabar and carried to Srirangapatnam by Tipu. He was also given a substantial pension by the English. Even today, the family trust created by Ghulam Muhammad out of this looted wealth is the largest Muslim trust in Calcutta.

#### TIPU'S ATROCITIES

During the notorious Padayottakkalam from 1783 to 1792, Tipu Sultan had committed a variety of atrocities against the Hindus and Christians in Kerala. Some of them as narrated by the Christian victims are vividly described by the famous traveller and historian, Fra Bartolomaeo, in his well-known book, *Voyage to East Indies*. Following is the verbatim description of the atrocities by a Christian victim as given in the book:

"First a corps of 30,000 barbarians who butchered everybody on the way, followed by the Field-Gun Unit under the French Commander, M. Lally. Tipu Sultan was riding on an elephant behind which another army of 30,000 soldiers followed. Most of the men and women were hanged in Calicut. First mothers were hanged

with children tied to the necks of their mothers. That barbarian Tipu Sultan tied the naked Christians and Hindus to the legs of elephants and made the elephants move about till the bodies of the helpless victims were torn to pieces. Temples and Churches were ordered to be burnt, desecrated and destroyed. Christian and Hindu women were forced to marry Muhammadans and similarly their men were forced to marry Muhammadan women. Those Christians who refused to be 'honoured' with Islam, were ordered to be killed by hanging then and there. The above version of the atrocities was obtained from the sorrowful narration by the victims who escaped from Tipu's army and reached Varapuzha (near Alwaye) which is the centre of Carmichael Christian Mission. I myself helped many victims to cross the Varapuzha river by boats" (Cited in *Cochin History* by K.P. Padmanabha Menon, p. 573).

It may be noted here that Fra Bartolomaeo was in the West Coast around March, 1790. Evidence of Tipu's atrocities against Christians are also available from the records of churches in Mangalore, Calicut and Varapuzha.

#### TIPU'S FANATICISM

It would be very relevant to reproduce here some of the letters which, Tipu Sultan had sent to his army commanders in different parts of Kerala and outside. Following are from the research articles published by Sardar K.M. Panicker in the *Bhasha Poshini* magazine of Chingam 1099 of the Malayalam Era corresponding to August, 1923. They were obtained by him from The India Office Library in London during his intensive research regarding Kerala history. Tipu's real character is revealed here.

1. Letter dated March 22, 1788, to Abdul Kadir: "Over 12,000 Hindus were 'honoured' with Islam. There were many Namboodiris (Brahmins) among them. This achievement should be widely publicised among the Hindus. There the local Hindus should be brought before you and then converted to Islam. No Namboodiri (Brahmin) should be spared. Also they should be confined there till the dress materials sent for them, reach you."
2. Letter dated December 14, 1788, to his Army Chief in Calicut: "I am sending two of my followers with Mir Hussain Ali. With their assistance, you should capture and kill all Hinuds. Those below 20 may be kept in prison and 5,000 from the

rest should be killed by hanging from the tree-tops. These are my orders.”

3. Letter dated December 21, 1788, to Sheik Kutub: “242 Nairs are being sent as prisoners. Categorise them according to their social and family status. After honouring them with Islam, sufficient dress materials may be given to the men and their women.”
4. Letter dated January 18, 1790, to Syed Abdul Dulai: “With the grace of Prophet Muhammed and Allah, almost all Hindus in Calicut are converted to Islam. Only a few are still not converted on the borders of Cochin State. I am determined to convert them also very soon. I consider this as Jihad to achieve that object.”
5. Letter dated January 19, 1790, to Badroos Saman Khan: “Don’t you know that I have achieved a great victory recently in Malabar and over 4 lakh Hindus were converted to Islam. I am now determined to march against that ‘Cursed Raman Nair’ without delay. (Reference is to Rama Varma Raja of Travancore State who was popularly known as Dharma Raja for giving shelter in his state to all those who fled Malabar.) Thinking that he and his subject would be soon converted to Islam, I am overjoyed and hence abandoned the idea of returning to Srirangapatnam.”

The last two letters quoted above were written after the first major defeat of Tipu Sultan near Alwaye on January 1, 1790. All these letters clearly betray the real character of Tipu Sultan whom a Kerala Muslim historian, Dr. C.K. Kareem, describes as of ‘Sufi’ traditions! If this is Sufism, what about Koranic Islam?

#### TEMPLES DESTROYED BY TIPU

The *Mysore Gazetteer* says that the ravaging army of Tipu Sultan had destroyed more than 8000 temples in South India. The temples of Malabar and Cochin principalities had to bear the brunt of plunder and destruction. The *History of Cochin* by K.P. Padmanabha Menon and *History of Kerala* by A. Sreedhara Menon narrate some of them:

“In the month of Chingam 952, Malayalam Era (corresponding to August, 1786) Tipu’s Army destroyed idols of the famous Perumanam Temple and desecrated all the temples between Trichur and Karuvannur river.

“Irinjalakuda and Thiruvanchikulam temples were also defiled and damaged by Tipu’s Army.”

Some of the other famous temples looted and desecrated were as follows: Triprangot, Thrichembaram, Thirunavaya, Thiruvannoor, Calicut Thali, Hemambika Temple, the Jain Temple in Palghat, Mammiyur, Parambatali, Venkitangu, Pemmayanadu, Tiruvanjikulam, Terumanam, Vedakhumnnathan Temple of Trichur, Belur Siva Temple, Shri Veliyanattukava, Varakkal, Puthu, Govindapuram, Keraladhiswara, Trikkandiyur, Sukapuram, Maranehei Temple of Aalvancheiri Tambrakkal, Vengara Temple of Aranadu, Tikulam, Ramanathakra, Azhinjalam Indiannur, Mannur Narayan Kanniar and Vadukunda Siva Temple of Madai.

The Trikkavu Temple of Ponnani was converted into Military Garrison. The Christian Pilgrimage centre of Palayur Church and Varapuzha Church and Mission buildings were among the several churches destroyed by the ravaging army of Tipu.

In the case of Triprayar Temple, the main deity was shifted temporarily to Gnanappilly Mana situated in a remote village, and in the case of Guruvayoor Temple, the idol was shifted to Ambalapuzha Sri Krishna Temple in Travancore State before the barbarian army of Tipu Sultan reached there. However, both of them were brought back and ceremoniously installed after the withdrawal of Tipu from Malabar towards the end of 1790. The Guruvayoor Temple was destroyed only partly because of the pleadings by Hydrose Kutty who was a favourite of Hyder Ali Khan besides being a devotee of Lord Krishna before his conversion. The damage that can be seen even today on the installed presiding deity of Triprayar Temple is believed to have been caused by Tipu Sultan’s army.

According to certain personal diary notes of Tipu Sultan, the Chirackal Raja offered to pay over Rs. 4 lakh in gold and silver to save the destruction of the local Hindu temples by Tipu’s army. But, true to his character, Tipu replied that “even if the entire world is offered to me, I will not desist from destroying Hindu temples” (*Freedom Struggle* by Sardar Panicker). It was the reply of a typical Islamic ruler!

#### TIPU’S LAND-GRANTS AND PUJAS

With this background in mind, we may now have a look at the circumstances that prompted the Islamic bigot, Tipu Sultan, to offer

land-grants and financial assistance to some Hindu temples, particularly the Sringeri Mutt.

When the astrologers predicted an approaching malefic period from 1790 onwards and the combined forces of the British, the Nizam and the Marathas started surrounding Srirangapatnam, Tipu Sultan panicked and therefore did some good deeds—offering land-grants and even *pujas* and feeding Brahmin—mainly to ward off the evil effects and to get assistance from his Hindu subjects in his war efforts. He was reported to have even fallen prostrate before His Holiness Sringeri Shankaracharya and sought the latter's pardon and blessings (*Sakthan Thampuran* by P. Raman Menon, and *History of Mysore* by Lewis Rice).

#### RESULT OF TIPU'S INVASION—HINDU EXODUS

The widespread atrocities committed by the Islamic tyrant and his equally cruel army of Muslim converts in Kerala, can be understood only from the authentic records available from various sources. According to them, about half the Hindu population of Kerala fled the country to the forests or Tellicherry and Travancore State. They included most of the Hindu Rajas and chieftains who could not stand up to the mighty army of barbarians and the powerful field-guns of the French. Important royal families which migrated to Travancore State were those of Chirackal, Parappanad, Ballussery, Kurumbranad, Kadathanad, Palghat and Calicut. The chieftain families which did the same were those of Punnathur, Kavalappara, Azhvancherry Thamprakkal, etc. Even the Cochin royal family moved to Vaikkom Palace near the famous Shiva Temple when Tipu's army reached Alwaye.

Many members of the royal families of Malabar who migrated to Travancore State preferred to stay back even after the withdrawal of Tipu's army and restoration of peace, because of their nightmarish experience and the peculiar psyche of the forcibly converted Muslim population in Malabar. The prominent royal families were (1) Neerazhi Kovilakam, (2) Gramathil Kottaram, (3) Paliyakkara, (4) Nedumparampu, (5) Chempra Madham, (6) Ananthapuram Kottaram, (7) Ezhimatoor Palace, (8) Aranmula Kottaram, (9) Varanathu Kovilakam, (10) Mavelikkara, (11) Ennakkadu, (12) Murikkoyikkal Palace, (13) Mariappilly, (14) Koratti Swaroopam, (15) Kaippuzha Kovilakam, (16) Lakshmipuram Palace, and (17) Kottapuram. The secularist admirers of Tipu Sultan have not even heard about the records available from these Malabar families.

The nightmarish results of Tipu's invasion of Kerala have been aptly described by the former editor of *Gazetteer of Kerala* and the renowned historian A. Sreedhara Menon. They state as follows:

#### ISLAMIC WARS

"Hindus<sup>3</sup>, especially Nairs and chieftains who resisted Islamic cruelties, were the main targets of Tipu's anger. Hundreds of Nair women and children were abducted to Sreerangapatanam or sold as slaves to the Dutch. Nairs were hunted down and killed and also deprived of all traditional and social privileges. Thousands of Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Nairs and other respected classes of Hindus were forcibly converted to Islam or driven out of their traditional ancestral homes. Thousands sought refuge in Travancore State while hundreds fled to forests and hills to escape Tipu's atrocities which had completely shaken their sense of security."

"The new phase of Mysore administration in Kerala resulted in unending wars. Extreme cruelties of the invading army had badly affected every section of the society, leading to the mass exodus of people from Malabar."

"Many Hindu temples, royal houses and chieftain families were destroyed and plundered. The exodus of Brahmins and Kshatriyas who were the patrons and custodians of traditional arts and culture, resulted in stagnation in the cultural field also."

#### ECONOMIC COLLAPSE

"Many prosperous towns were destroyed while the local and foreign trade collapsed. Peasants who had to bear the brunt of army cruelties and coercive taxation policies, sought refuge in forests and mountains. In many areas, cultivation of pepper stopped resulting in the collapse of pepper trade. Consequent to the stoppage of foreign trade coupled with the precipitate fall in cultivation and local trade, economy of the country was also shattered; and major sections of the people were reduced to poverty. Thus every section of society was badly affected by the military regime of the Mysore rulers."

#### HINDU-MUSLIM CONFLICTS

"Huge amount of wealth in the form of gold and silver accumu-

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<sup>3</sup> Irrespective of caste groups, all Hindus are generally referred to as only Nairs in all the records of Mysore and European administrations.

lated through centuries of foreign trade, vanished from the country as a result of loot and plunder during the chaotic period of the military regime of Hyder Ali Khan and his son, Tipu Sultan. Another serious development which had long term bad effect was that Malabar Muslims joined hands with the ranks of cruel invading Mysore army and proved their loyalty to Islamic faith by committing various atrocities against Malabar Hindus. This earned them enmity of Hindus. To gain political advantage, they resorted to forcible conversion of Hindus to Islam and also widespread destruction and plunder of Hindu temples. The Mysore administration under the Muslim rulers had not only encouraged such cruelties against the Hindu population but also gave the local Muslim converts special privileges and tax exemptions, leading to serious cleavage and enmity for the first time, between the two communities, Hindus and Muslims, in Kerala.”

#### MAPPILA OUTRAGES OF 1921

According to the widely respected Congressman and freedom-fighter, K. Madhavan Nair, “the notorious Mappila Lahala (Khilafat Riots) of 1921 in Malabar could be easily traced to the after-effects of widespread forcible conversions and cruelties committed by Tipu Sultan during the Padayottakkalam”. Thus Tipu Sultan was considered and depicted by all the well-known historians from Kerala and elsewhere as an evil genius and Islamic tyrant, much worse than even the notorious Aurangzeb who beheaded Guru Teg Bahadur, destroyed thousands of Hindu temples including Vishwanath Temple at Kashi and Sri Krishna Temple at Mathura, and forcibly converted lakhs of Hindus in North India.

#### PROOFS OF ISLAMIC ATROCITIES

Tipu Sultan was like the notorious Kala Pahar—a renegade Brahmin convert from Bengal—who used to celebrate every time he killed or forcibly converted 10,000 Hindus. The darkest period in the history of Kerala was the period of Hyder Ali Khan and Tipu Sultan from 1766 to 1792—socially, culturally and politically. Ruins of hundreds of Hindu temples destroyed by Tipu Sultan and his father Hyder Ali Khan are the standing witnesses to their brutalities in Kerala. One also finds a heavy concentration of Mappilas along the invasion routes of Tipu’s army, including the places of its temporary occupation, as in Mangalore, Cannanoor, Ponnani, Kon-

dotty, Malappuram, Calicut, Kodungallur, Chawakat, Alwaye, Coimbatore, and Dindigal. This is another proof of forcible circumcision and conversion of helpless Nairs, defenceless Thiyyas and poor Cherumans on a mass scale. Even today, the origin of many Kshatriya, Nair and Brahmin families settled in Travancore and Cochin can be traced back to their ancestral families in Malabar—yet another proof of the severity of Tipu's atrocities against Hindus during his Islamic wars in Kerala.

#### MOTIVATED RESEARCH

If Tipu Sultan had done any good deeds, there should have been some references to them in the authentic historical documents of that period. The admirers of Tipu Sultan have never cited any authentic references. They quote some observations and comments made by historians or political thinkers of North India, especially of Jawaharlal Nehru University, or Aligarh Muslim University, or some other Marxist school. They have never bothered to study the voluminous documents available in Kerala, Coorg and Karnataka. Their ignorance of South Indian history and traditions is no justification for glorifying a cruel and fanatic Islamic tyrant that was Tipu Sultan. He was a despicable character, an Islamic fiend, and a national villain in the eyes of the proud Malayalees and the valiant Coorgis.

#### TIPU—A CURSED NAME

If Tipu Sultan was a much-loved and respected Muslim ruler, as claimed by his present-day admirers, why is it that even Muslims do not name their children as Tipu, either in Mysore or in Malabar? Obviously, the name itself is a cursed name. Anyway, that is the belief in the entire West Coast and Mysore.

#### NATIONAL SCANDAL

If such a notorious character is presented on the official network of Doordarshan as preaching patriotism, nationalism, high principles of Hindu religion, and human welfare, that is not only a national scandal but also a provocation for the Hindu community throughout the country. It is better to bury deep and forget the repulsive memories of Tipu Sultan and save the South from communal conflicts. The Hindus of Kerala who were the victims of the Islamic atrocities of Tipu Sultan, do not want to be reminded of him, just as the Jews do not want to be reminded of Hitler, or the Romanians of Ceasesescu, or the Russians of Stalin.

## DON'T FABRICATE HISTORY

Historical truth should not be allowed to be suppressed, or distorted, or falsified in order to project a national villain as a national hero. Today it is Tipu Sultan, tomorrow it will be Aurangzeb or Nadir Shah. If a renegade Indian glorifies the notorious Tipu Sultan today through a “historical novel”, tomorrow the same or some other motivated authors will produce more and better “historical novels” extolling Mahmud Ghaznavi, Malik Kafur, Aurangzeb, and Nadir Shah for a tele-serial. As Dr. I.M. Muthanna says in his famous book, *Tipu Sultan X-rayed*, “such dubious and mischievous historians and novelists should be prosecuted through judicial commissions so that at least in future such blatant lies and invented stories will not be sold or published as history or historical novels”. If in spite of the voluminous evidences to the contrary, the Doordarshan authorities agree to telecast anti-national and anti-Hindu serials on its official network, consequences will be terrible in the long run.

## BURY THE SWORD

Every Hindu in Kerala knows that Tipu's slogan was “Sword” (death) or “Cap” (forcible conversion). The “Sword” symbolises death to Hindus. Thus the very title of the novel and the serial, “The Sword of Tipu Sultan”, is offensive and provocative. No self-respecting Hindu will tolerate such an insult to his religion, culture and national pride.

There was only one Aurangzeb and one Nadir Shah. And also one Tipu Sultan! Project them to the local people as known from authentic historical records. Otherwise the very purpose for which the official media of Radio and Doordarshan have been set up—to disseminate and present correct information and not lies and untruths—will be defeated. Let us hope that the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting will insist that the Doordarshan abides by the national motto—SATYAMEVA JAYATE.

The secularist Government and parties refuse to see reason and insist on projecting Tipu Sultan as a national hero. This shows their respect for truth, history and sentiments of the Hindu community. The rise of Hindu anger in the South, as witnessed in the recent past, is a direct result.

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## APPENDIX 1

# MAPPILAS OF MALABAR

1. It would be worthwhile to have some broad idea of the character of Mappilas who became notorious after the invasion of Kerala by Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan. The following notes are based on the documented history of the period contained in the *Malabar Manual* of William Logan.
2. The Mappilas had not dared to disobey their Hindu Rajas before the advent of Mysore Sultans with their Islamic brutalities in Kerala. But having joined hands with Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan, they assisted them in all their Islamic atrocities against the Hindu population. Since the whole of Malabar was divided into a number of independent principalities, the Mysore Sultans who had a huge army and powerful field-guns, had no difficulty in subjugating the tiny kingdoms one by one. The Mysore army was defeated only when it attacked Travancore which by then was a big state, and had acquired superior field-guns and a trained army.
3. The first thing that Ali Raja of Cannanore did after his appointment as the Naval Chief of Hyder Ali's army, was to capture the king of Laccadives and present him to Hyder Ali after gouging out the eyes of the helpless victim (p. 459). Later the fisherfolk living there were forcibly converted to Islam. According to the report of Gen. Abercromby of Bombay who was in Kerala supervising the English Company's operations, "Mappilas are fanatic Muslims who are also treacherous by nature. From the repeated treachery and notorious infidelity of the whole Mappila race, rigid and terrifying measures have become indispensably necessary. Lenity (towards Mappilas) has been found ineffectual" (p. 533).
4. Mr. Conally who was the District Magistrate for some years in Malabar, wrote as follows in his report to the Government in 1852: "For some years past, the province of Malabar has been disgraced by a succession of outrages of the most heinous character, perpetrated by the Mappilas on Hindus. Bodies of Mappilas have openly attacked Hindus of wealth and respectability, murdered them under most horrible circumstances, burnt their houses or given them up to pillage, and finally would up their crimes by throwing away their lives in

desperate resistance to the police and military. While on former occasions, the fanatic Mappilas spared women and children, they had in the last outrage put to death men, women, children, even the infants sucking at the breasts of their mothers, guests and servants, in short every human being, found in the house of attack.” (p. 636).

5. Mr. Thomas Strange who had served in various capacities in Malabar investigated the real cause of frequent Mappila outrages, especially those relating to land disputes. According to his study report, circumstances of these outrages are mostly unconnected with any provocation, real or imaginary (p. 640). In no instance can any outrage or threat of outrage that has arisen, be attributed to oppression of Muslim tenants by Hindu landlords. A great clamour is now raised in this regard, prominently in the (Muslim majority) southern talukas seeking to throw the blame for the (Mappila) outrages upon the Hindu landlords thus accusing the Hindus as the cause thereof. “I have given the subject every attention and am convinced that though the instances (of Mappila outrages) may and do arise out of individual hardships to tenants (Mappila and Hindu), the general character of the dealings of Hindu landlords towards their tenants whether Mappila or Hindu, is mild, equitable and forbearing” (p. 641).
6. His conclusion regarding the frequent Mappila outrage against Hindus was that they were the result of Islamic teachings by one of their high priests—Aval Thangal of Thirurangadi: “It is no sin, but a merit to kill a Hindu Janmi who evicts” (p. 691). Even today Islamic mullahs preach hatred against Hindus in a similar tone.
7. Mr. Strange observed further: “Since land is with the Hindus and the money with the Mappilas, to get the land, the Mappilas encouraged (or resorted to) fanaticism” (p. 691). “And finally the result was that there was steady movement whereby in all Mappila tracts, the land was passing slowly but surely to the possession of the Mappilas” and the Hindus were going to the walls (p. 493). Today, Mappilas are rich landlords and traders while the Hindus have been generally reduced to the status of service class people in the Malabar region of Kerala.
8. Encouraged by the perverted Khilafat movement, this anti-

Hindu fanaticism resulted in the notorious Mappila outrage of 1921 in Malappuram district of Malabar. While the Congress Party tried to explain away the Mappila riots as part of anti-British patriotic action, the Communist Party defended the riots as class war—landless tenants against landlords. Both interpretations were provided by the respective political parties in order to gain political support of the aggressive and fanatic Muslims in the country. Even today, when the victims of Muslim riots are Hindus, the same old explanation is invariably put forward by these parties to shift the blame on to Hindu community.

9. The above reports and assessments of Mappila outrages since the advent of Muslim invasion in 1766, hold good even today. It is the peculiar psyche that the Muslim converts have developed in the subsequent years, which has resulted in the communal flare-ups in all Muslim-dominated localities throughout the country. Islamic violence breeds on Hindu cowardice. Once the Hindus, especially their self-seeking leaders, understand the Muslim psyche and the Koranic sanction for violence against Hindus and other non-Muslim people, peace, prosperity and integrity of the country shall be established and preserved.

## APPENDIX 2

# NEDUMKOTTA: TRAVANCORE DEFENCE FORTIFICATION

The Nedumkotta was a defence fortification constructed along the northern borders of the erstwhile Travancore State. It passed through the territories of the then Cochin State.

The Nedumkotta was built primarily to resist the invasion under Hyder Ali Khan against Travancore State. It was raised mainly with clay and mud, and reinforced with stones, laterite and granite at strategic places. It started from the Krishan Kotta on the west coast, above Kodungallur, and stretched upto the Annamalai Hills on the Western Ghats. It was about 48 km long, twenty feet wide and twelve feet high. Its alignment was along the Periyar river on the west coast upto Chalakudy from where it went along the Chalakudy river upto the Annamalai Hills in the east. There were underground cells to store gunpowder and other war materials, special chambers for soldiers to live, and look-outs and mounted field-guns all along the fortification. Besides, on the north side of the fortification, ditches were dug twenty feet wide and sixteen feet deep, and filled with thorny plants, poisonous snakes, and hidden weapons. On the south side as well as on the top of the fortification, wide roads were laid for the convenience of military movements.

The fortification was constructed during the regime of Rama Varma Raja, popularly known as Dharma Raja of Travancore, and under the direct guidance and supervision of the then Prime Minister, Ayyappan Marthanda Pillai, and the then Commander of the Travancore Army, the Portuguese Captain D'Lenoy. This historic defence line was comparable to the Great Wall of China except that the latter was more ancient and greater in length. It was under the protective cover of this Nedumkotta that a small army of Travancoreans under the command of Raja Keshavadas defeated and frustrated near Alwaye a formidable army of Islamic fanatics led by Tipu Sultan.

Today there is no physical evidence of the historic Nedumkotta in the form of even ruins anywhere in the Mukundapuram taluka—Chettuva, Parur, Kodakara, Chalakudy, Mullurkara, Enamanakhal and Karikodu—through which it passed. However, some place-names having a reference to the historic fortification

are still popular in the northern borders of the erstwhile Cochin and Travancore States—Krishnan Kotta (meaning Krishnan Fort), Kottamukku (fort corner), Kottamuri (part of a fort), Kottaparampu (fort land), Kotta Vazhi (fort road), Kottalaparampu (magazine ground), Palayam (cantonment), etc.

Unfortunately, there are no memorials erected anywhere in Kodungallur, or Trichur, or Alwaye to honour Dharma Raja who gave shelter in his state to thousands of Hindus escaping from the Islamic brutalities of the fanatic Tipu Sultan; or Ayyappan Marthanda Pillai who was the architect of the historic Nedumkotta; or Raja Keshavadas under whose direct command a comparatively small army humbled and defeated the invading army of Tipu Sultan; or scores of valiant Hindu soldiers who laid down their lives to protect their country and faith.

The most despicable and shameful act of the anti-Hindu secularist government of Kerala since Independence was that instead of honouring the legendary heroes of the land, a memorial in the form of a flagstaff was erected near the historic Trichur Palace to perpetuate the memory of the Islamic bigot Tipu Sultan who was instrumental in the forcible mass circumcision and killing of Hindus destruction of Hindu temples, and devastation of the Malabar, Trichur, Alwaye and Kodungallur regions.

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## SCANDALOUS TELE-SERIAL ON TIPU SULTAN

PRAKASH CHANDRA ASDHIR

“Should a serial on Tipu be telecast?”—this question deserves the attention of every Hindu.

The points made out by a progressive Muslim, Asghar Ali Engineer, in support of the telecast of the serial, “The Sword of Tipu Sultan”, are really very interesting. He bluntly states, “The Sword of Tipu Sultan may be a historical novel, and the story may be somewhat different from actual history. After all, the author is at liberty to portray the characters as he wishes and tell his story in any fashion—to depict the central figure (Tipu) in a positive or romantic or negative light. And in this case, if the writer, Bhagwan Gidwani, has chosen to ignore or underplay some of the more unpleasant aspects of the ruler and the regime, he is well within his rights as a writer of fiction to do so. He cannot be condemned even if he has restricted his research to buttress his view of Tipu.”

We would request Shri Engineer that, in this paragraph, he may substitute *Satanic Verses* for *The Sword of Tipu Sultan*, “Prophet Muhammad” for “Tipu” and “Salman Rushdie”, for “Bhagwan Gidwani”, and tell us how does it appeal to his secular mind. History has to be based on facts, howsoever unpalatable they may be. It cannot be converted into fiction because it is then nothing but distortion.

Shri Engineer declares, “No, Tipu was not a religious fanatic. He was a ruler, first and last.” Agreed. Similarly, Salman Rushdie is not a religious fanatic. He is a writer, first and last. Then, why was there a ban on *Satanic Verses*, a fictional novel of Salman Rushdie, in this country?

The other point which Shri Asghar Ali Engineer has made out about Tipu Sultan deserves the attention of all Indians in general and the Government of India in particular. He states, “No, Tipu was not a religious fanatic. He was a ruler, first and last. And whatever he did, he did to consolidate his rule. If he did humiliate and carry out some atrocities against the Nairs in Kerala, he did it to crush the Nair rebellion that had gained strength as the community was bitterly opposed to Tipu establishing his rule in its territory. He did forcibly convert hundreds of Nairs and other Hindus in Kerala to

Islam. But he did this to punish them for rebelling against his supremacy—and changing their religion was the most severe punishment he could inflict on the rebels.”

Let this historical finding of this Muslim intellectual be accepted and applied in Kashmir where there is a rebellion now. As a severe punishment to the rebel Muslims, they should be converted to Hinduism and those who refuse to embrace Hinduism should be dealt with as Tipu Sultan dealt with the Hindu rebels. Why should India not be equally ruthless in dealing with these people who are challenging the authority of the Government? After all, such an action of the present Government to convert these Muslims to Hinduism, as per Shri Engineer’s logic, will not be out of any bigotry or for the simplistic reason that they are Muslims but because they are challenging the territorial integrity of the country and want to overthrow a Government duly established by law. The “same practical politics” which Tipu Sultan applied against the Hindus in the South should now be applied in Kashmir. Shri Engineer should be glad to accept his appointment as General of such a Conversion Brigade for action in Kashmir.

Shri Engineer should know that mere fighting against the British cannot make a person nationalist. Neither can appointment of a few Hindus to some senior posts make a religious bigot a secular and benign ruler. After all, in all times, the rulers always make use of the services of those people who are willing to serve their cause. Such people get no regard, nor can they make the usurpers, invaders and tyrants secular, or benign, or nationalist. Were there no Hindus and Muslims and people of other communities who were serving the cause of British Imperialism in this country? Will it make the British rulers nationalist in this country?

If the present Government wants to establish its secular credentials by allowing the telecast of Tipu Sultan by getting its clearance through the pliable and obliging Marxist Hindu or Muslim historians (of JNU/Aligarh/Islamia variety) for the purpose of record, then it should first of all lift the ban on *The Satanic Verses*, a fictional novel of Salman Rushdie, and telecast a serial based on this novel. If the Government cannot swallow it, then it should not only ban the serial “The Sword of Tipu Sultan”, but also burn the book on which it is based. The Government should also seriously consider applying in Kashmir the methods of “practical politics” of Tipu Sultan as commended by Mr. Engineer, in order to deal with the rebellion there.

The secularist tribe in this country must realise that no useful purpose will be served by putting secular garbs on these barbaric rulers who were only usurpers. Such actions only revive the centuries-old wounds and embitter the relations between Hindus and Muslims. The whole exercise, it should be realised, runs against the process of National Integration envisaged by the Government and the people of this country. Ghaznavis, Ghuris, Baburs, Aurangzebs, Hyder Alis and Tipu Sultans can only carry the coffin of secularism and nothing more. Let the souls of these tyrants lie in their graves and be raised only on the day of 'Qiamat' (Doomsday) when Allah will put them on trial for their crimes against humanity.

*Organiser*, March 4, 1990

## TIPU SULTAN: A FANATIC MUSLIM

RAVI VARMA

The Union Government's decision to ban the book on Prophet Mohammad entitled *The Satanic Verses*, by an internationally renowned Muslim scholar, Mr. Salman Rushdie, has been described as a shameful surrender to the minority lobby of fanatic Muslim leaders like Shahabuddin, Sulaiman Sait and Imam Bukhari. Similarly, the internationally acclaimed film on Jesus Christ titled *Last Temptation of Jesus Christ* has been banned in India so that the religious feelings of the tiny though powerful Christian community may not be hurt. But what about the religious sentiments of seventy crore Hindus in India? Neither the socialist and secularist Union Government nor the secularist political parties of different hues show any respect for Hindu sentiments. Why? Because they do not mind hurting the religious feelings of seventy crore Hindus in India.

Otherwise, how could a secular, democratic Union Government approve and allow Doordarshan to project a fanatic Muslim king—Tipu Sultan—who was only a usurper, as a national hero? It was Tipu Sultan and his fanatic Muslim army who converted thousands of Hindus—Thiyyas, Nairs and tribals—to Islam all along the invasion route, and occupied areas in North Kerala, Coorg, Mangalore and other parts of Karnataka. Besides, over 8,000 Hindu temples were desecrated and/or destroyed by his Muslim army in Malabar, Cochin, Coorg, Mysore and Tamil Nadu.

Even today, one can see large concentrations of Muslims and ruins of hundreds of destroyed temples in North Kerala as standing evidence of the Islamic brutalities committed by Tipu Sultan in Kerala. But the Union Government seems to want to distort Kerala history and project this fanatic Tipu Sultan as a national hero like Chhatrapati Shivaji and Rana Pratap Singh!

Let the advisers of the Union Government read history of Kerala written by Sardar K.M. Panicker, K.P. Padmanabha Menon, and others to understand the brutalities committed by the fanatic Muslim army of Tipu Sultan in Kerala. Let them also know how valiantly the Zamorins of Calicut had fought a relentless war against the Portuguese and the Dutch who wanted to establish their su-

premacY on the west coast of Kerala. Another respected Hindu king, Pazhassi Raja of North Malabar, who fought a long guerrilla war against the powerful British General, Wellesly, and defeated his army, had to sacrifice his life in order to uphold the heroic and patriotic traditions of the Hindu Rajas of Kerala.

But the Union Government has not issued even a postal stamp or published any authentic book on account of these heroes of Kerala.

Tipu Sultan was only a usurper. He fought a war of expansion against Cochin and Travancore after running over the lands of a weak Zamorin. He could not succeed in his ambition and became a cripple because of the joint resistance by Cochin and Travancore armies. Simply because Tipu Sultan died in Srirangapatnam while escaping in the night from the fort which had been surrounded by the British army, does not make him a national hero. He fought an imperialist war in South India seeking the help of the French Army.

To project Tipu Sultan as a national hero is not only a distortion of South Indian history, but also an insult to the seventy crore Hindus, especially of South India.

*Organiser*, April 2, 1989

## TIPU SULTAN AND DOORDARSHAN

K. GOVINDAN KUTTY

It was Bhagwan Gidwani's obvious intention to extol Tipu Sultan when he wrote what he called a "historical novel"—*The Sword of Tipu Sultan*. Sanjay Khan's approach to the subject could not have been different when he embarked on his controversial telefilm project based on Mr. Gidwani's book. Whether their adulation of Tipu is consistent with facts of history is what an expert panel set up by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting is supposed to determine. But Doordarshan's predicament is that it may still not be able to telecast "The Sword of Tipu Sultan" without intensifying Hindu resentment in Kerala where considerable sections of people regard the "Tiger of Mysore" as an inveterate tormentor, and a symbol of religious bigotry.

What is questioned is not Gidwani's right to hold and spread his view of Tipu, or Sanjay Khan's endeavour to show him up as an apostle of patriotism and secularism. What is resisted is the move to use a nationally-owned medium to glorify a historical figure whose name is intimately associated with torture and forcible conversion of Hindus in one part of the country. Generations upon generations of Hindus have known the stories of Tipu's depredation in Kerala. They cannot view with equanimity Doordarshan's portrayal of him as a noble king. The stories were not concocted by the British; they were only told by them.

It may not be true technically that whatever image of Tipu or for that matter of any other individual is projected through Doordarshan should be deemed to have tacit official recognition. But can Doordarshan permit an alternative portrayal of Tipu in a perspective in which the irate Hindus of Malabar view him?

Long before Gidwani came out with his "historical novel" in 1976, there were attempts in Kerala to depict Tipu as a hero and a reformer. In a book in Malayalam published in 1959, P.K. Bala-krishnan glorified Tipu, giving him credit for attempting to restructure the ownership of land in Malabar and discouraging decadent customs and traditions. No one thought of burning that book. It was just taken as another point of view albeit outrageous.

Some years later—well before Gidwani came out with his

eulogy—there was a still more breathtaking re-evaluation of Tipu's exploits in Malabar. Its author, C.K. Kareem, a former editor of the Kerala State Gazetteer, went so far as to show Tipu as a philosopher and a great sufi, who viewed the whole cosmos as a mosque! Kareem's "finding" was that Tipu came to be painted black just because those who wrote history in Kerala were the descendants of people who had to suffer hardship after his advent. His argument was that the repression represented by Tipu was not for the sake of Islam but to govern a newly-conquered territory.

The views such as those of Balakrishnan, Kareem and Gidwani have been vehemently contested, but no one has questioned their right to hold such views and propagate them. The movement to resist the glorification of Tipu based on Gidwani's book, which is no more profuse in the praise of its subject than Balakrishnan's or Kareem's, has taken roots mainly because a government medium run with public money is sought to be used to give credence to an assessment which is not only painful to a segment of the people but also debatable. The Hindu view of Tipu's conquest of Malabar has not changed in spite of Balakrishnan's and Kareem's attempt to make him out as a sufi and a reformer. The historical view taken by K.M. Panicker and K.P. Padmanabha Menon and showing Tipu as a tormentor, continues to hold sway.

The Hindu reaction should also be viewed against the backdrop of minority petulance to which Kerala has been a witness in recent years. A case in point is the instant removal from a college textbook of a literary appreciation of Nikos Kazantzakis's *Last Temptation of Christ*. A few years ago, an opposition member—subsequently a minister—demanded withdrawal of that book on the ground that it contained a vilification of Christ. No one wanted to be told that no Christian could be more pious than Kazantzakis.

When a theatre adaptation of the novel, admittedly clumsy, was attempted, clergymen as well as laymen rose in revolt and the play was readily banned. The ban continues in spite of the change of government. It is amusing to recall that those now in power had, when they were not in power, described the ban as tantamount to surrendering the freedom of artistic expression to clergymen. Hail Pseudo-Secularists!

Hindu passions were roused again following an agitation for permission to build a church in the precincts of Sabarimala Temple where St. Thomas was supposed to have installed a cross even

though many hold that there was just not enough evidence to establish that St. Thomas came to Kerala and set up a church at Nilakkal and six other places. But the minorities had their way.

In view of all this, if Doordarshan telecasts “The Sword of Tipu Sultan” it will only vitiate the atmosphere.

*Indian Express*, April 12, 1990

## THE TELE-SERIAL ON TIPU SULTAN

P. PARAMESWARAN

In normal course, Doordarshan should have full freedom to telecast any serial which is not against the interest of the general public. But here, the problem is not a novel. It is the distorted presentation of historical events and historical personalities. In the process of projecting certain people in glorifying terms, an attempt is also being made to deliberately defame certain other people. When it is mixed with a dose of religious fanaticism, it becomes dangerous. It could lead to religious conflicts. Is it not better to avoid such personalities?

Tipu Sultan had not only given some financial assistance to a few temples including Sringeri Mutt, but he had also destroyed hundreds of temples and carried out forcible mass conversions as well. He had also indulged in mass murders. Letters and orders directing to do such horrible things were also issued by Tipu Sultan. If such things are deliberately suppressed, that will amount to injustice to the population who were the victims of his cruel atrocities. Even if it is only for promoting communal harmony, blatant lies should not be deliberately propagated. For the promotion of communal harmony, let people produce novel, poetry or even cinema. In the case of history, a acknowledging the mistakes would be the best way to correct the mistakes; and not to whitewash the mistakes. If it is not done, that will result in emotional outbursts (as now).

Donations and grants supposed to have been given by Tipu Sultan to Sringeri Mutt and temples were, as revealed in the letters concerned, meant only to promote his selfish interests and also to ward off the evil spirits through the conduct of *pujas* and *homas*. It is absurd to argue that such occasional good deeds bore testimony to Tipu Sultan's faith in all religions. Probably Tipu Sultan had committed atrocities as well as some good deeds. If Doordarshan which has a special obligation and duty to the general public, wants to project a serial on Tipu Sultan, let it present both sides. Doordarshan is the most powerful official media. That media should not be used to do injustice to the people and to distort recorded history. Project truth as truth; if that is not possible for some reason, it

is better to keep complete silence on the whole issue.

Telecast of the serial is not that essential. Do not think that all the people in the country consider Tipu Sultan only as a hero. If necessary, let there be a national debate and serious research among honest historians (not of JNU and AMU variety) within the universities and outside. Then the resultant conclusion could be presented to the public for their benefit.

*Kesari*, February 11, 1990

9  
A LETTER TO SHRI P. UPENDRA

DR. P.C.C. RAJA

To

Shri P. Upendra,  
Hon'ble Minister for Information & Broadcasting,  
Government of India,  
New Delhi.

Sir,

I am a member of the Zamorin's family, Calicut. As you are perhaps aware, the Zamorin of Calicut was the ruler of Calicut before the advent of the British. I am a retired Headmaster of the Zamorin's High School, Calicut. At present I am a practising Homeopathic physician. I am aged 79 years.

I am constrained to send this letter specifically with intent to stop the telecasting by the Doordarshan authorities of the proposed serial "The Sword of Tipu Sultan". Newspaper reports show that you have allowed the serial to be telecast on the basis of a compromise deal and on condition that some clarifications would also be telecast making it clear that the serial is based on a fiction. In other words, the telecasting of the abovesaid serial has been permitted by you in the form in which it is published by Bhagwan Gidwani in his novel, *The Sword of Tipu Sultan*. The net result of the permission granted to telecast the serial would be to make out that Tipu Sultan was a great and benevolent martyr, if not an outstanding ruler who possessed heroic qualities, depicting Tipu Sultan as it does, as the citadel of all virtues and good qualities. The proposal made by Sri K.R. Malkani to make an insertion that Tipu's rule in Kerala and Coorg is not being dealt with in the serial, merits no consideration because the average viewer would be left with the impression that Tipu Sultan was an ideal ruler especially when several deliberate and grave omissions relating to the terrible and inhuman atrocities that were really perpetrated by Tipu Sultan during his infamous march into Malabar are seen to have been made in the book of Bhagwan Gidwani. As a member of the Zamorin's family my blood gets boiled even today when I hear the very mention of Tipu's name because the worst crimes and the worst sort of atroci-

ties were really perpetrated by him on the Hindus of Malabar. In fact the Zamorin of Calicut and the members of his family are well known for their religious tolerance and catholicity of outlook as would be seen from recorded history. But wholesale conversion of all people into Islam was indulged in by Tipu Sultan at gun point. Those who did not obey had either to flee away from the country or to face the bayonet. No other option was available according to recorded history. It will be useful if you will kindly refer to the writings of Prof. K.V. Krishna Iyer as well as *Malayalam Encyclopedia* (Volume 7, published by Sahithyaka Pravasthaka Sahakarna Sangham Ltd., Kottayam, p. 996, para 3, column 1). The several inhuman, barbarous, and brutal acts done at the behest of Tipu Sultan cannot be summarised even in a thousand printed pages. In the circumstances, a cryptic statement that Tipu's controversial roles are not purported to be dealt with in the serial can hardly assuage the feelings of the victims and would hardly render justice to the injured, their families, and their successors. Kindly also refer to the report of a Joint Commission of Bengal and Bombay appointed to inspect the state and conditions of the province of Malabar in the years 1792 and 1793 (Volume 1, paras 52, 64, 67) kept in the National Archives of India, Janpath, New Delhi. A bare perusal of the above report will convince anyone that Tipu Sultan, far from being a benevolent ruler, was one of the worst fanatics, and more inhuman than even the Nazis.

As a member of the family which then ruled a large part of Malabar, I cannot allow history to be distorted, much less allow the serial to be telecast leaving out references to Tipu's atrocities and crimes which really outshine and outnumber his meagre achievements. The result of your present decision will enable an everlasting impression being created on viewers who see the serial that Tipu Sultan was a man of great religious tolerance and was a benevolent and secular ruler. The truth and reality being that Tipu Sultan was one of the worst bigots known to this land, all his so-called achievements and alleged glorious deeds pale into insignificance especially before the several gruesome and inhuman atrocities and monstrous barbarities that were perpetrated at his command and direction, all with intent to establish his hegemony and perpetuate his hold in this country. To slur over his misdeeds or at least wink at them would really amount to travesty of justice and fair play to a huge section of this country's vast population, whose

only sin was to be a member of the majority community.

I may also bring to your notice that the telecasting of this serial on Tipu Sultan has every chance of pushing our ideal of national integration farther into the remote future.

Before I conclude this report, I would also like to focus your kind attention on another important aspect relating to the book, *The Sword of Tipu Sultan* written by Bhagwan Gidwani, whether it be titled a fiction or historical novel. I am referring to the several defamatory passages contained in the book. I humbly repeat that the book is full of slanderous allegations against the then ruler—the Zamorin—which have absolutely no regard for truth. As you are aware, no one has a right to sully the fair name and reputation of another person living or dead, much less Bhagwan Gidwani or the publishers of that book. The several passages in the impugned book are replete with innuendos and malicious untruth against the Zamorin, the then ruler of Malabar. I submit that the book is therefore liable to be banned both for the reason that libellous and highly defamatory allegations are repeatedly made against the Zamorin and also inflammatory statements and assertions are made against the members of the majority community, all obviously with intent to appease the fundamentalists in the minority community. I submit that having regard to the fact that the Government of India was zealous in protecting the rights of a minority community when it banned the book, *The Satanic Verses* by Salman Rushdie, it behoves a secular Government of which you are the Information Minister to immediately take steps to ban the book and prevent further telecasting of the serial “The Sword of Tipu Sultan” based on that book. I appeal to you as a member of the Zamorin family that, to do justice at least to the Zamorin of Calicut, kindly use your power and authority to stop telecasting of the serial immediately and forthwith. The people of Malabar shall be grateful to you if you will do that.

Yours faithfully,

CALICUT

May 23, 1990

Sd./-

Dr. P.C.C. Raja

# 10

## HIGHLIGHT OF AGITATION AGAINST THE TIPU SULTAN

B. N. JOG

Three years back, one news item which appeared on the pages of many dailies attracted my attention. The news item was about a big studio-fire in Bangalore, where shooting of Shri Sanjay Khan's tele-serial, "The Sword of Tipu Sultan" was in progress. Scores of young artistes died and many others were injured in the studio-fire. While going through the press report, I was amazed to read that "in this TV serial Tipu Sultan is being depicted as a great warrior and secular benevolent ruler". Tipu Sultan who forcibly converted thousands of Hindus and Christians to Islam, hanged to death hundreds of innocent women and children, and destroyed and looted scores of temples and churches in Malabar, Cochin, Coorg, Dindigal, Mangalore and Coimbatore, a secular, fair-minded ruler! Hypocrisy also must have some limit.

It was this that promoted me to write an article about the historical character of Tipu in a Marathi weekly, *Vivek*. Soon another article on the subject written by a reputed journalist and scholar, Shri Arvind Kulkarni, appeared in a popular Marathi weekly, *Shree*. A number of similar angry criticisms were published in Malayalam and Kannada papers and weeklies.

A silent storm soon started gathering momentum in the South. A well-known historian, Dr. Ravindra Ramdas, came to me to discuss about the effective way of stopping the telecast of blatant lies and distorted history of Tipu Sultan on the national network. Thereafter, both of us met and discussed with a leading jurist and advocate, Shri Madhavrao Pathak, which resulted in filing a Writ Petition in the Bombay High Court by Dr. Ramdas and three others of Bombay Malayalee Samajam. The press woke up only when the Court case was filed. Many articles praising Tipu's secular credentials, administrative genius, and benevolent and charitable disposition started appearing in the English dailies. Most of them were based on heresay and secular prejudices of JNU and Aligarh historians, and were devoid of any authenticity. Interesting, *The Times of India* was the only English paper which consistently published only pro-Tipu articles and biased news items, and refused to pub-

lish in its columns the views and articles sent by nationalist Hindus. But most of the regional language papers carried articles that had more balance than those in the English press. Of course, they do not know that the English press has already ceased to be the opinion-makers in the county. That credit has already gone to the regional language papers.

Many of my colleagues expressed doubts about getting justice from the Writ Petition filed in the Bombay High Court. Therefore, Hindu Ekjoot, an organisation dedicated to the protection of Hindu national identity and ideology, decided to take the issues of misusing the national network to the people's court. Dr. Harish Shetty, President of Hindu Ekjoot, along with many youthful members of Hindu Ekjoot and Bombay Malayalee Samajam organised a series of street corner meetings, demonstrations and poster campaigns in Bombay with the active participation and support of local units of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, the Hindu Mahasabha, and other nationalist organisations. A big Dharna was organised in front of Churchgate Station. Also a massive Morcha was taken out to Bombay Doordarshan Kendra under the joint auspices of Hindu Ekjoot and a number of similar nationalist organisations. The Morcha was led by Shri Vidyadhar Gokhale, Shiv Sena M. P., Advocate Madhavrao Pathak, Advocate P. R. Mukhedkar, Dr. Ravindra Ramdas, Dr. Harish Shetty, and many others.

In the meantime, Bombay Malayalee Samajam and Ekjoot submitted a memorandum signed by over 500 citizens to the Hon. Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Shri P. Upendra. When the agitation spread and the pressure increased, the Hon. Minister stated that he would refer the controversial tele-serial on Tipu Sultan to a committee of historians for scrutiny and clearance before releasing it for the telecast. Hindu Ekjoot then called for a boycott of the products of companies sponsoring the anti-national tele-serial. While many reputed companies like Tata and Reliance shied away from the beginning itself, Parle Products Limited, who were misled by false propaganda, later wrote to Hindu Ekjoot: "Please note that we have stopped sponsoring the serial."

Thereafter, the Convenor of Bombay Malayalee Samajam, Shri Nandagopal Menon, and Advocate P.R. Mukhedkar, who was assisting Advocate Madhavrao Pathak in fighting the case in the Court, took the agitation to Delhi where they met Shri L.K. Advani and Ram Naik, both M.Ps, Shri B.L. Sharma, President of

Indraprastha Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Hon. Minister Shri P. Upendra and also Shri K.R. Malkani who had cleared the controversial Tipu serial. Later, they addressed a Press Conference to highlight the distorted history and objectionable portions in the novel by Bhagwan Gidwani on which the tele-serial was based. All the Delhi papers carried the news and also gave wide coverage to the agitation spreading against the Tipu Serial. Some of them even expressed their surprise when they learnt about the clean chit given by Shri K.R. Malkani of Sanjay Khan's tele-serial of blatant lies and distorted versions of history. A Marathi journalist, Shri Dilip Karambekar of *Vivek*, published and distributed a forceful rebuttal to the arguments of Shri Malkani.

I completely fail to understand as to how a person like Shri Malkani could approve the serial with minor modifications. His argument seems to be that Muslim community needs a hero to be proud of and only Tipu could be dressed up or white-washed to fit the bill! He did not even care to read through a variety of authentic references and documents from Karnataka and Kerala Gazetteers about Tipu's Islamic prejudices and atrocities and forcible mass conversions in Kerala, sent to him by Bombay Malayalee Samajam. He only asked Doordarshan to delete the offensive word "Sword" from the title, "The Sword of Tipu Sultan". The inscription on the sword of Tipu Sultan was: "This my victorious sword is for the destruction of Hindus. Victory to Allah. He is the only Saviour. O Allah! help us against Hindus who refuse to embrace Islam." Even the Bombay High Court found the inscription on the sword aggressive and offensive and hence suggested the deletion of the word "Sword" from the title of the Serial. Neither the Government of India nor the Doordarshan agreed to comply with the judicial direction. That is the respect shown to the judiciary by the secularist Government and its official agencies !

The Indraprastha Vishwa Hindu Parishad thereupon held a massive Dharna in front of Mandi House under the leadership of its President, Shri B.L. Sharma (Premji), to protest against the Government's inaction on the matter. Later on, a one-day fast was undertaken to protest against the telecast of the manipulated and distorted version of Tipu Sultan on the national network. A number of leading public figures participated in the fast, prominent among them being Mahant Avaidyanath of Hindu Mahasabha, Uma Bharati of BJP and Shri B.L. Sharma (Premji).

The Bombay Malayalee Samajam sent a mass petition to the Supreme Court requesting it to take up the matter under Public Interest Litigation. But the Supreme Court did not entertain the request. The Bombay High Court finally dismissed the Writ Petition after several months because many of its earlier judicial decisions had been subsequently reversed by the Supreme Court on appeal. Even the Supreme Court, from which justice based on historical facts was sought and expected, did not hand down a written verdict, nor gave judicial reasons for rejecting the appeal.

Though the appeal was not entertained by the Supreme Court, I am glad on one score. The Petitioners had put up a relentless fight up to the last temple of justice—the Supreme Court. Posterity will surely be proud to recall that Hindu nationalists opposed the anti-national Serial and went up to the Supreme Court seeking justice based on historical documents and national pride. It is another matter that they did not get justice even from the Supreme Court.

The agitation and Court case brought to focus many things:

1. Relief and justice may not be forthcoming even from the highest and final legal body—the Supreme Court.
2. Justice is very often delayed, thus denying justice to the aggrieved party who ultimately loses confidence and respect for the Judiciary.
3. Nature of the Court verdict itself need not be very palatable nor justifiable as in this case.
4. Expenses involved in fighting a case in the Supreme Court are beyond the capacity of anyone who is not very rich. Thus it is beyond the reach of an ordinary citizen.

The positive side of the agitation was the growing assertion by Hindu nationalists against the tendency of the secularist Government to distort and suppress historical records and hurt Hindu sentiments to suit narrow political needs. Such tendencies were forcefully and effectively exposed in various meetings addressed by Shri. Durganand Nadkarni. I would like to mention specially the late Dr. P.C.C. Raja of the Zamorin family who exposed Shri Bhagwan Gidwani for making obscene remarks in his novel about the person of a respected Zamorin Raja. He even wrote to the Government of India not only for banning such a dubious and vulgar novel but also for prosecuting the fake novelist. Dr. Muthanna is another eminent scholar who exposed the dubious novelist through a well-documented book, *Tipu Sultan X-rayed*. There

were so many public figures who contributed to the cause of the agitation against the distortion of documented history for political purpose. I also congratulate many journals and weeklies, especially *Vikram* of Bangalore, *Vivek* and *Tarun Bharat* of Bombay, and *Kesari* and *Mathrubhoomi* of Calicut. Expect a few leftists and anti-Hindu historians from the JNU and the AMU, all other media-men were generally supportive of the main cause.

I am certain that the Government and the Judiciary will open their eyes and issue specific guidelines governing the clearance of tele-serials on the national network similar to provisions of the Cinematography Act. At present, Doordarshan is a law unto itself. Such guidelines will avoid embarrassments, angry agitations, and legal battles in future.

The agitation against this serial has amply made it clear to the Government and the Judiciary that whenever and wherever history is deliberately distorted or suppressed and Hindu sentiments are hurt to suit narrow political needs, the vast majority of Hindu nationalist forces would rise in protest, maybe more forcefully and decisively in future.

# 11

## HISTORY OF LEGAL BATTLE AGAINST THE T.V. SERIAL—THE Sword of Tipu Sultan

Madhavrao D. Pathak, Advocate

1. The legal fight against the shameful and motivated attempt of Doordarshan and the Government of India to project the usurper king of Mysore, Tipu Sultan, as a national hero, was a long, expensive and frustrating ordeal. According to authentic and documented history of the period, Tipu Sultan had hanged to death and sold as slaves a large number of innocent men, women, and children; looted and destroyed and burnt down hundreds of Hindu temples and Christian churches; and circumcised and converted to Muhammadanism thousands of Hindus and Christians in Mangalore, Coorg, Coimbatore, Dindigal, and Kerala. He had made territorial concessions to the French whose help he sought to fight the British. He had also sent emissaries to Islamic countries—Afghanistan, Iran, and Turkey—inviting them to conquer the whole of North India for the glory and spread of Islam. But the Doordarshan serial on Tipu Sultan, based on a novel entitled *The Sword of Tipu Sultan* by Bhagwan Gidwani, was full of deliberate distortion, fabrication, and suppression of recorded facts of history with the object of glorifying a villain as a national hero, a benevolent ruler, and a paragon of all virtues.
2. The Petitioners objected to and protested against Doordarshan misusing the official media network to telecast a controversial serial full of lies, distortions and white-washed stories about a historical figure who was hated all over South India for his heinous crimes and cruelties in the service of Islam. This was bound to mislead the gullible general public into believing that a treacherous and cruel Islamic bigot was a renowned national hero—travesty of truth which is against the very spirit and purpose for which the Doordarshan was set up. It was for these reasons that the Petitioners requested the Bombay High Court (later the Supreme Court also) to restrain the Government of India and Doordarshan from telecasting the Tipu Serial based on the dubious novel of Bhagwan Gidwani. They asked the Court to direct the

Doordarshan to project the character of Tipu Sultan based on his real life known from the recorded history of South India.

3. A mass petition signed by over 500 citizen was also sent to the Supreme Court, as a public interest litigation, for registering a case against the distortion of history and misuse of official media. The Supreme Court, however, did not entertain the petition without assigning any reason for its rejection.
4. Therefore, a legal notice was issued on December 23, 1989, on behalf of Shri B.N. Jog, President of Hindu Ekjot, to (1) the Secretary, Information and Broadcasting Ministry, and (2) the Union Government, New Delhi, to restrain them from telecasting the controversial Tipu Serial for reasons given therein.
5. Subsequently but independently, Dr. P.C.C. Raja of the Zamorin Family of Calicut wrote to the Hon'ble Minister for Information, Shri P. Upendra, objecting to the Tipu Serial based on Gidwani's dubious novel which contained obscene and vulgar references to the Zamorin ruler of that time. He also asked the Minister to get the book itself banned as it insulted his ancestors.
6. On December 26, 1989, a Writ Petition was filed in the Bombay High Court jointly by (1) Dr. Ravindra Ramdas, (2) Shri R.G. Menon, (3) Shri P.C.C. Raja, and (4) Shri Ravi Varma. The Respondents to the Petition were (1) Secretary, Information and Broadcasting Ministry, (2) the Director of Doordarshan, (3) Union of India, (4) Shir P. Upendra Hon'ble Minister for Information and Broadcasting, and (5) Shri K.R. Malkani who had cleared the tele-serial. Later, at the instance of the High Court, Shri Sanjay Khan, producer of the controversial serial, was also included as a Respondent.
7. The Bombay High Court presided over by justice S.C. Pratap and Justice A.V. Savant heard the arguments of the Petitioners, and also of the opposite side, mainly Sanjay Khan. Then it dismissed the Petitioner's plea to stop Doordarshan from telecasting the controversial serial. The High Court was convinced about the authenticity and accuracy of source references presented by the Petitioners in order to prove and substantiate the crimes, cruelties, and treacherous activities of Tipu Sultan during his military occupation of Malabar. Some of these facts were even incorporated in the High Court's judgement. The High Court, however, said that the Writ was

being dismissed because the scope and power of judicial review by the High Court were limited by the tests and parameters already laid by the Supreme Court. (See Court judgement in Appendix).

8. Subsequently, an appeal for judicial review and appropriate relief was filed in the Supreme Court which gave a verbal judgement allowing the Doordarshan to continue the telecast of the white-washed version of the life and deeds of Tipu Sultan. The Petitioners were painfully surprised and disappointed by the Supreme Court judgement not only because no relief was given but also because no convincing reasons were advanced for allowing the telecast of such a serial on the official network. This landmark judgement can be cited in future as justification and legal sanction for projecting Aurangzeb, Nadir Shah, Malik Kafur and a host of similar villains as national heroes.

#### MOTTO OF DOORDARSHAN

9. The motto of Doordarshan is Satyam Shivam Sundaram. It has been constituted in order to provide entertainment, correct information and also to spread education. To allow Doordarshan to spread falsehood as historical truth through the Serial—*The Sword of Tipu Sultan*—is against the letter and spirit of the Doordarshan's motto. If Tipu Sultan is presented on official media as a great national hero and benevolent ruler now, tomorrow Mahmud Ghaznavi, Allaudin Khalji, Malik Kafur, Aurangzeb, and Nadir Shah etc. can also be presented as paragons of great virtues on the same media.

#### DISCRIMINATION AGAINST VEER SAVARKAR SERIAL

10. While Doordarshan is officially sponsoring and projecting distorted versions of historical events relating to a notorious Islamic ruler who offered territorial concessions to the French and invited Islamic countries to invade North India in support of his own *jihād* in South India, many a serial on respected national heroes are deliberately refused permission for being telecast on national network. For example, the T.V. Serial on Veer Savarkar was made in 1987 by Prof. Hirananda Shrivastava. The script was approved by the then Information and Broadcasting Minister, Shri V.N. Gadgil. A Pilot serial of six episodes was shot in Europe and submitted to the

Doordarshan on February 23, 1987. The episodes were seen and approved by V.N. Gadgil, Vasant Sathe, and Ajit Panja. They covered mainly the progress of our Freedom Struggle and the heroic deeds of Veer Savarkar during the period. But the Doordarshan rejected the serial on June 3, 1987 on flimsy grounds like poor cast, bad presentation, preaching revolutionary ideas, etc. On the other hand, in the case of Tipu Sultan, Doordarshan had no hesitation to clear the lengthy serial after seeing only the first 3-4 episodes in which the serial's hero, Tipu Sultan, had not even appeared on the scene. The anti-Hindu distortion of an original episode in a novel—Tamas—and the boosting of a historically discredited Bhadur Shah as the last great Mughal Emperor, was never objected to by the Mandi House.

#### CORRUPTION IN DOORDARSHAN

11. There is rampant corruption, favouritism, and nepotism in the Doordarshan. The fast action by the machinery of Door-darshan taken in the case of Tipu Sultan, throws much light on its working. Experience shows that the bureaucracy of Doordarshan is more powerful than the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Department. The agents of corruption have an upper hand over the bureaucracy. It is a very sorry state of affairs. The forums of Legislature and Executive in a democracy fail very often to redress the grievances and, therefore, the only hope is Judiciary. There is no adequate and prompt alternative or efficacious remedy except approach to the High Court or the Supreme Court in their extraordinary jurisdiction. However, experience shows that this forum also is not above board. The citizens seem to be helpless in the circumstances. Still they look to the Judiciary for justice.

#### COMMENTS

12. The authorities at the helm of Doordarshan act expeditiously in approving and displaying certain serials. By the time the people come to know of the mischief done, and approach the judiciary, the serial is in the midst of being completed (as happened in the case of the serials on Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, Tamas, and some others). In the case of Tamas, contrary to the original version of a Mulla throwing the dead pig into the mosque, the Doordarshan deliberately twisted

the event and showed a young Hindu doing the mischief and thus fomenting communal riots. When the judiciary was approached, it refused to direct the Doordarshan to stick to the original version.

13. The judiciary is also slow in taking decisions when the malafides of the persons concerned with the serials are exposed. People are now quite aware of the fact of a “committed judiciary”. Justice delayed is justice denied. The ultimate result is frustration of the common man, and erosion of credibility of the judiciary. When the four pillars of democracy—the Legislature, the Executive, the Judiciary and the Press—fail in giving justice to the common man it gives birth to revolution.

#### NOTICE TO THE ADVOCATE OF DOORDARSHAN

14. The Advocate of the Petitioners served a notice to the Advocate of Doordarshan not to telecast the serial during the pendency of the Writ Petition in the Bombay High Court, stating that it would amount to contempt of court. A contempt petition was also filed on June 11, 1990. In spite of this, the serial was telecasted on September 19, 1990, and the Court was not informed about the start of the tele-serial, even though the legal process was continuing in the Court. The Court also preferred not to take any notice or raise any objection to the surprise of the Petitioners.

#### HEARINGS AT THE HIGH COURT

15. There were nearly 14 days of hearing in the Bombay High Court. On June 29, 1990, Shri Yakub Sayed, Dy. Director (Programmes), Doordarshan Kendra, Bombay, filed an application opposing the admission of the Petition and grant of interim relief. The application was filed only for this limited purpose. The affidavit he gave did not reply to any of the allegations contained in the Petition. Even so on August 30, 1990, the matter was heard and the Petition was dismissed at the admission stage itself. Prayer for leave of appeal to the Supreme Court was also rejected.
16. During the hearings, it was suggested by the Court that the Petitioners withdraw the Petition. The suggestion was turned down immediately by the Petitioners. This matter was of the nature of public interest litigation. The Petitioners had no

personal interest, and were seeking no gain. They were fighting for a nationalistic and patriotic cause and to uphold certain principles.

#### APPEAL TO THE SUPREME COURT

17. In September, 1990, Petition for special leave to appeal (Civil) was filed against the Judgement dated August 30, 1990 passed by Bombay High Court.
18. The points of law of great public importance stated in the Petition were—whether the T.V. Serial on Tipu Sultan was in conformity to the guidelines for sponsored programmes issued by the Doordarshan on July 18, 1986; whether the High Court was right in not going into the question of the pre-review committee; whether the High Court has powers of judicial review in view of the contents of two Gazetteers from Kerala and Mysore produced by the Petitioners; whether the High Court was right in allowing a controversial serial to be telecast for its remaining episodes; whether the High Court was right in dismissing the Writ Petition; whether the High Court has considered rightly the provisions of Article 19(2) as to reasonable restrictions on the freedom of expression; whether the test laid down under Article 19(2) has been complied with by the Producers; and whether on the contentions and the record produced by the Petitioners before the High Court, the restrictions imposed in Article 19(2) have been properly exercised by the persons concerned.

#### SALIENT POINTS INVOLVED IN THE CASE AND THE ARGUMENTS ADVANCED

- Point No. 1: The High Court of Bombay failed to have the judicial review in such subject matter.
- Argument: Now it is a settled law that the Courts can have a judicial review in such subject matters as have been decided by several High Courts as well as by the Supreme Court in several cases. The High Court of Bombay has failed to have the judicial review in the subject matter. As such, it is now the onerous task of the Hon'ble Supreme Court to have the judicial review in the matter.
- Point No. 2: Challenge to “Approval”, “Pre-review Committee”, and the “Opinion” of Malkani, the person appointed for the Committee.

- Argument:
- a. The “Approval” is arbitrary, malafide and colourable. There is no application of mind. It is contrary to the guidelines. It is contrary to the declared policy and object of Doordarshan.
  - b. The “Pre-review Committee” refused to consider the historical aspect of the subject matter, saying that they have no jurisdiction. None of the members had any training in history as such, or knowledge of Indian history and culture. Only one journalist constituted the Committee.
  - c. Malkini is not a historian, as he himself admits. He is a one-man informal committee. No Committee has been formed of historians as promised by the Hon’ble Minister, Information and Broadcasting, Government of India. The opinion of its own one-man Committee has not been accepted in toto or rejected in toto.
  - d. Cinematograph Act, 1952, does not apply to Doordarshan. The aims and object of this Act are to prevent the presentation to the public of improper or objectionable matters, and to ensure that erroneous, distorted, or misleading films are not presented. There are several principles for guidelines under the Act. There is an Examining Committee, a Review Committee, and a Censorship Board. There are several statutory authorities provided in the Act and then only the Censorship Board issues Certificates. In the present case, there are no such provisions. There are only certain guidelines and the opinion of the Director General is final.

Point No. 3: Violation of guidelines, particularly 7 (u).

Argument: The guidelines say that the decision of the Director General of Doordarshan is final. But they are not strictly complied with. There is contravention of guidelines. The guidelines are misconstrued. Dishonesty or intentional disregard of the guidelines is also there. Clause 7(u) (1) says: “Promote the basic socio-cultural values like human unity and harmony; equal re-

spect to all religions; rejection of violence, communal rivalries and tensions; liberation from superstitions and prejudices.” It is said by Doordarshan that the serial has been approved under Clause 7(u) (1).

There is an Editorial Board under the Ministry of I&B, Government of India. This Board assists the Ministry in the production of documentaries relating to India’s Freedom Struggle, both at national and regional levels. 50 such documentaries have been prepared. But the Tipu Serial was not at all referred to the said Editorial Board for their opinion on the subject.

Point No. 5: The dominant character of Tipu Sultan as presented in the book of Gidwani “The Sword of Tipu Sultan”.

Argument: There is ample record and large documentary evidence which throws light on the dominant character of Tipu Sultan. The Petitioners had produced relevant Gazetteers of Mysore and Kerala and the letters of Tipu Sultan at the time of hearing at the Bombay High Court. They had proved:

1. He claimed to be a Paigamber.
2. He adopted the title of Padshah.
3. He sometimes designated his own State as “Sircar-e-Khodadad -e- usud-ilhye -e- Ahmady”—in plain language, an Islamic State.
4. He introduced a new calendar beginning with the birth of Mohammed the Prophet, and the names of the months and years were in Arabic language and Hijra calendar.
5. He changed the Hindu names of cities, towns, villages, and forts to Muslim names in the State of Mysore.
6. Inscriptions on Tipu’s sword, on stones, on coins, and on gold mohurs were in the name of Allah, or in the name of prophet Mohammed, or in praise of Islam, or for the destruction of unbelievers and infidels (Hindus).

7. He invented new names for his coins. His gold and silver coins were named after the saints of Islam. His copper coins bore the Arabic and Persian names of stars. The first double paisa of Tipu was named Afzal Khalifa. Some pagoda pieces were called Ahmadi, one of the names of the Prophet.
8. He introduced new weights and measures.
9. The list of chiefs of every province and district showed only Muslim names. All the strategic positions were held by Muslim, and not a single Hindu name is found.
10. He created two types of troops or corps—Ahmadis and Usad Illeye. The Hindu captives were converted as Usud Illye and the rest were said to be Ahmadis.
11. His commands were promulgated in the language of the Koran, particularly in keeping with passages from Chapter II, IX, and LXI.

The Koran says: "Fight with those who do not believe in God and in the last day, and who do not consider those things as unlawful which God and his Prophet have prohibited and profess not the true religion, and fight with those unto whom the scriptures have been given, until they pay tribute by right of subjugation and be rendered low."

Tipu proclaimed: "It is our constant object and sincere intension that those worthless and stiffnecked infidels (Hindus) who have turned aside their heads from obedience to the true believers, and openly raised the standard of infidelity should be chastised by the hands of the faithful and made either to acknowledge the true religion or to pay tribute."

12. He regarded the war in Kerala as holy: "Having come to the resolution of prosecuting a holy war against them, deem it expedient."
13. He proclaimed that his commanders should serve Islam: "Promoting the prosperity and

advantage of the people of Islam and the overthrowing of unrighteous infidels, you will do whatever may be in your power to increase the luster of the firm religion of Mohammed.

14. He was out to humiliate the Hindus and glorify Islam: "By the blessings of Allah and the aid of the Prophet, the forces of the accursed, having experienced a signal defeat and chastisement, have turned their faces to flight, and the troops of Islam are victorious over the enemies of the faith. Thus the army of the accursed infidels has been trodden underfoot by the hoofs of the horses of Islam and rendered vile and miserable, while the religion of Mohammed has been thereby made to flourish. You, Sir, will, therefore, apply with all your heart the best means of advancing the religion of Mohammed and of administering to the support of Islam."
15. He appealed to the Muslims abroad, specially the Asian Sultans, to help him in his mission. He wrote to Zaman Shah the ruler of Afghanistan, and to the Persian and Turkish rulers. He pleaded with them to invade North India and depose the infirm (Moghul) king who had reduced the faith to this state of weakness.
16. He wrote to Zaman Shah, the king of Afghanistan, that "we should come together in carrying on a holy war against the infidels, and for freeing the region of Hindustan from the contamination of the enemies of our religion (Hindus)".
17. He sent delegations to Kabul, Basra, Istanbul, Mauritius, and Paris, and embassies to Persia, Turkey, and Constantinople, that is, to the Caliph of Islam.
18. He invited the French for help against the British in India for his own purpose. His plan was to divide South India between himself and the

French. There were written agreements between the two parties in this respect. He requested the French to supply ten thousand trained Europeans and thirty thousand negroes.

19. He demolished eight thousand Hindu temples and forcefully converted thousands of Hindus and Christians.

All these clearly explain and establish the dominant character of Tipu Sultan as a Fanatic and cruel Islamic ruler, as inviting foreign imperial powers to invade and subjugate the country, and also as committing every known method of cruelty to convert Hindus. He did all this for the glory and spread of Islam in India. He never had any patriotic sentiments nor high principles as depicted in the scandalous novel of Bhagwan Gidwani.

The Hon'ble Supreme Court, after stating that all the places, personalities and events are historical, allowed the Doordarshan to telecast the distorted version of the life and deeds of Tipu Sultan as a non-historical fiction. The only satisfaction for the Petitioners was that they fought a prolonged legal battle against the distortion of history and the mischief of Doordarshan, both in the Bombay High Court as well as in the Supreme Court. Though they failed to get justice, their valiant fight will encourage future generations to take up similar national causes.

APPENDIX  
IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE  
AT BOMBAY

Writ Petition No. 5435 of 1989

1. Dr. Ravindra Ramdas.
2. Mr. Ravi Varma.
3. Mr. R.G. Menon.
4. Mr. P.C.C. Raja.

....Petitioners

VERSUS

1. The Secretary,  
Union of India, Information and Broadcasting Department,  
New Delhi.
2. Director  
Doordarshan  
New Delhi.
3. Mr. Sanjay Khan.
4. Union of India,  
New Delhi.
5. Mr. P. Upendra,  
Hon'ble Minister for Information and Broadcasting Department,  
New Delhi.
6. Mr. K.R. Malkani,  
Deen Dayal Research Institute,  
New Delhi – 110 019

Mr. M.D. Pathak for the petitioners.

Mr. R.V. Desai with Mrs. Neeta V. Masurkar and Mr. A.S. Khan for  
respondent nos. 1 and 2.

Mr. E.P. Bharucha i/b M/s Desai, Berjis & Company for respon-  
dent no. 3.

**Coram: S.C. Pratap & A.V. Savant, JJ,**

Thursday, 30th August, 1990.

Oral Order: (Per S.C. Pratap, J.)

1. This petition under Article 226 of the Constitution is directed  
against the TV serial "The Sword of Tipu Sultan".

2. Mr. M.D. Pathak, learned Counsel for the petition has, vehemently and with courage of his conviction, put forth before us the point of view of the petitioners and what, according to Mr. Pathak, large section of the Indian society considers and feels about this serial. He has invited our attention to a passage from the *Kerala District Gazetteers*, published by the Government of Kerala in 1962 as also passages from the *Mysore Gazetteer*, compiled for the Government and published in the year 1930. We decline to comment thereon but simpliciter reproduce the same in fairness to the petitioners. The passage from the *Kerala District Gazetteers* runs thus:

“...In a proclamation issued to the people in 1788 he outlined his new scheme of social reform as follows: ‘From the period of the conquest until this day, during twenty-four years, you have been a turbulent and refractory people, and in the wars waged during your rainy season, you have caused number of our warriors of taste the draught of martyrdom. Be it so. What is past is past. Hereafter you must proceed in an opposite manner, dwell quietly and pay your dues like good subjects and since it is the practice with you for one woman to associate with ten men, and you leave your mothers and sisters unconstrained in their obscene practices, and are thence all born in adultery, and are more shameless in your connections than the beasts of the fields: I hereby require you to forsake these sinful practices and be like the rest of mankind; and if you are disobedient to these commands, I have made repeated vows to honour the whole of you with Islam and to march all the chief persons to the seat of Government.’”

Tipu’s proclamation created universal resentment and the whole country rose in rebellion. Fearing forcible conversion about 30, 000 Brahmins alone fled to Travancore. The Kottayam and Kadattanand Rajas sought the English East India Company’s protection. Calicut was attacked in November, 1788. Tipu’s officers laid hands on the Karanavappad of Manjeri. The Nairs of Calicut and South Malabar headed by Ravi Varma and other princes of the Padinjara Kavilakam turned in despair on their oppressors. Tipu set 6,000 troops under M. Lally to raise the siege, but Ravi Varma could not be driven out of the field.

Earlier, in 1789, Tipu himself came down to Malabar via the Tamarasserri Ghat to enforce his proclamation at the point of

his sword. General orders were issued to his army that ‘every being in the district without distinction should be burned, that they should be traced to their lurking place, and that all means of truth and falsehood, force or fraud should be employed to effect their universal conversion’. The Kadattanad Raja’s fortified palace at Kuttipuram was surrounded and 2,000 Nairs, forced to surrender after a resistance of several days, were circumcised and regaled with beef. Several Rajas and rich land owners fled to Travancore where the Dharma Raja rendered them all help to rehabilitate themselves in their new surroundings. The poor Nairs, however, retreated into the jungles and were relentlessly pursued by Mysorean troops. From their jungle homes the Nairs could engage themselves in a kind of guerrilla warfare against the enemy forces. Hence Tipu organised a regular and systematic Nair hunt with the help of his soldiers. He then proceeded to Cannanore and after celebrating the marriage of his son with the daughter of the Ali Raja, marched along the coast of Chowghat to overawe the native population by a show of his power. From there he retired to Coimbatore after making arrangements for the administrative reorganisation of the province and leaving a permanent army of occupation to frighten the population into passive submission.”

3. The passages from the *Mysore Gazetteer* are as follows:

- a. “The reversion of Mangalore to the possession of Tipu was signalized by the forcible circumcision of many thousands of Indian Christians and their deportation to Seringapatam. A revolt in Coorg next year led to the same treatment of the greater part of the inhabitants the occasion being marked by Tipu’s assumption of the title of Badshah. All Brahman endowments were at this period resumed.”
- b. “In January 1788 Tipu descended to Malabar, and remained there several months arranging for its effective administration and the reformation of its people, calling upon them either to give up their sinful practices or be honoured with Islam. He also ordered the destruction of Calicut and the erection of a new fortress of the name of Furruckku (Feroke), and then marched to Coimbatore in the monsoon. He also now began to lay claim on the title of Paighambar, or apostle, on the ground of his religious successes, and symptoms of incipient

madness, it is said, appeared. From Coimbatore he visited Dindigul, and meditated, it appears, the conquest of Travancore. Laying waste with fire and sword the territories of refractory palegars, he returned to Seringapatam, and devoted four months to a classification of Sayyids and Sheks in his army to distinct brigades, leaving for the time being the Patans and Moghuls to be intermixed with the Hindus. A simultaneous rebellion occurred now in Coorg and Malabar, and the Sultan, passing through Coorg to quiet it, entered Malabar. Large parties of the Nairs were surrounded and offered the alternative of death or circumcision. The Nair Raja of Cherkal, who had voluntarily submitted, was received and dismissed with distinction, but immediately after, on a false charge of conspiracy, was killed in a skirmish, his corpse being treated with every insult. Over 8,000 temples were also desecrated, their roofs of gold, silver and copper and the treasures buried under the idols amounting to many lakhs, being treated as royal plunder. Before leaving Malabar, Tipu visited Cannanore, where the daughter of the Beebee was betrothed to one of his sons. He also divided the country of Malabar into districts, each of which had three officers, charged respectively with the duties of collecting the revenue, numbering the productive trees, and seizing and giving religious instructions to Nairs. His orders were, that 'every being in the district, without distinction, should be honoured with Islam; that the houses of such as fled to avoid that honour should be burned; that they should be traced to their lurking places, and that all means of truth and falsehood, fraud or force, should be employed' to effect their universal conversion."

- c. "...On the handle of the sword presented by him to Marquess Wellesly was the following inscription:

My victorious sabre is lightning for the destruction of the unbelievers. Haider, the Lord of Faith, is victorious for my advantage. And moreover, he destroyed the wicked race who were unbelievers. Praise to be him, who is the Lord of the Worlds! Thou art our Lord, support us against the people who are unbelievers. He to whom the Lord giveth victory prevails over all (mankind). Oh Lord, make him victorious, who promoteth the faith of Muhammad. Confound him, who

refuseth the faith of Muhammad; and withhold us from those who are so inclined. The Lord is predominant over his own works. Victory and conquest are from the Almighty. Bring happy tidings, Oh Muhammad, to the faithful; for God is the kind protector and is the most merciful of the merciful. If God assists thee, thou will prosper. May the Lord God assist thee, Oh Muhammad, with mighty victory.”

- d. “On some gold medals, also found in the palace, the following legend, in Persian, was seen on one side: “Of God the bestower of blessings and the other, victory and conquest are from the Almighty”. Apparently they were carved in commemoration of some victory probably after the war of 1780. The following is a translation of an inscription on the stone found at Seringapatam, which was to have been set up in a conspicuous place in the fort:

“Oh Almighty God! dispose the whole body of infidels! Scatter their tribe, cause their feet to stagger! Overthrow their councils, change their state, destroy their very root! Cause death to be near them, cut off from them the means of sustenance! Shorten their days! Be their bodies the constant object of their cares (i.e. infest them with diseases), deprive their eyes of sight, make black their faces (i.e. bring shame).”

4. Mr. Pathak also referred to the compilation which, according to the learned Counsel, contains some letters by Tipu himself. This compilation is styled as *Tipu Sultan X-rayed* by Dr. Muthanna and published in the year 1980. We are, however, not inclined to reproduce the contents thereof in this order.

5. Mr. Pathak also invited our attention to the following statement of the producer Mr. Sanjay Khan in paragraph 5 of his affidavit:

“The petitioners have by an amendment to their contempt petition alleged that the handle of “The Sword of Tipu Sultan’ bore an inscription as set out in para 14 B. I deny that the original Sword of Tipu Sultan bore any such inscription as alleged or at all.”

Mr. Pathak submits that the sword of Tipu Sultan does bear an inscription and the same is as per the extract embodied in paragraph 14 B. He further submitted that the original sword is still there in the Government Museum at Mysore and the inscription can even now be checked. He also referred to Mr. K.R. Malkani’s report which *inter alia* contains the following recommendation:

“However, because of the reported excesses of Tipu in Coorg and Kerala, there is a strong feeling, particularly in Kerala, against a Tipu TV serial, I, therefore, suggest the following. Tipu’s sword used to carry an offensive engraving, as was probably the custom in those times. It is, therefore, suggested that the title of the serial be changed from “The Sword of Tipu Sultan’ to just ‘Tipu Sultan’. A few years back when equestrian statue of Shivaji was to be put up in Minto Park, New Delhi, the Government suggested that the statue need not carry a sword; the sponsors agreed.”

6. Since Mr. Malkani’s report was heavily relied upon by the Government itself and as there was deviation from his recommendation regarding the serial title, we have, on the last occasion, suggested to the producer’s learned Counsel, Mr. Bharucha, to consider whether the words “The Sword of” could be deleted retaining the title as “Tipu Sultan”. However, on taking instructions, he informed us today that it would not be possible to do so. Be that as it may, we do not wish to pursue this aspect any further.

7. The main question is: In a case such as this what is the scope and ambit of the power of judicial review? Unfortunately for the petitioners, this question is no longer *res integra*. Tests and parameters stand already laid down by the Supreme Court in as many as three decisions. The first ruling is *Ramesh Chotala Dalal v. Union of India and others*, AIR 1988 SUPREME COURT 755 relating to the serial “Tamas”. The second decision is the one in *Odyssey Communications Pvt. Ltd. v. Lokvidyan Sanghatana and others*, AIR 1988 SUPREME COURT 1643 in the matter of the serial “Honi Anhoni”. And the third is the one in *S. Rangarajan V. P. Jagjivan Ram and other* (1989) 2 Supreme Court Cases 574, overruling a Division Bench ruling of the Madras High Court reported in AIR 1989 Madras 149. In view of the law laid down by the Supreme Court in its rulings *supra* we feel it unnecessary to trek and traverse the same terra-firma over again.

8. As a result, the petition fails and the same is dismissed.

9. Mr. Pathak prays for leave to appeal to the Supreme Court. However, as order on this petition is based on the rulings of the Supreme Court itself, leave to appeal is declined.